The Dissertation Committee for Richard Bennett Slatcher certifies that this is the approved version of the following dissertation:

PARTY OF FOUR:
CREATING CLOSENESS BETWEEN COUPLES

Committee:

James W. Pennebaker, Supervisor

Rebecca S. Bigler

Samuel D. Gosling

Robert A. Josephs

Timothy J. Loving

PARTY OF FOUR:
CREATING CLOSENESS BETWEEN COUPLES

by

Richard Bennett Slatcher, B.S.

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Dedication

To the shared friends that Julia and I have made together over the past 10 years. In addition to the multitude of ways in which you have enriched our relationship and our lives, you've given me a career's worth of research questions to pursue.

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Several key individuals have helped make my Ph.D. journey an incredibly stimulating, fun and thought-provoking adventure. As the final phase of my formal education comes to a close, I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank a few of them.

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PARTY OF FOUR:
CREATING CLOSENESS BETWEEN COUPLES

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Richard Bennett Slatcher, Ph.D.

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Supervisor: James W. Pennebaker

In recent years, a small but growing number of psychologists have begun to examine how the quality and stability of people's romantic relationships can be influenced by people outside of those relationships. Couples' friendships with those in their social networks appear to be particularly relevant determinants of what makes for a happy and lasting relationship. However, previous studies only have indirectly addressed underlying psychological mechanisms that may explain why friendships are beneficial for couples or how such friendships arise in the first place. This dissertation examines how friendships between couples form and potential implications for within-couple processes (e.g., the effects of friendships between couples on relationship quality within a couple). Pairs of unacquainted heterosexual couples in committed dating relationships were randomly assigned to one of two conditions where they engaged in a 45-minute interaction. In one condition, couples carried out self-disclosure tasks that gradually escalated in intensity; in the other condition, couples engaged in non-emotional small talk

discussions. The procedure used was a modified version of the closeness induction task developed by Aron and colleagues (Aron, Melinat, Aron, Vallone, & Bator, 1997) to generate interpersonal closeness between individual strangers—in this case modified to generate closeness between couples. One day later and one month later, participants were asked to complete brief online follow-up measures to assess long-term effects of the experimental manipulation on perceptions of the other couple, feelings of closeness toward romantic partners, and whether or not they had contacted the other couple. Those in the high-disclosure condition felt closer to the couples they interacted with and closer to their own partners after the interaction compared to those in the small talk condition. Further, couples in the high-disclosure condition were significantly more likely than those in the small talk condition to contact and meet up with the other couple they had met in the study. Mediation analyses suggested several possible processes underlying these effects. Implications for studying the interplay of social networks and romantic relationships are discussed.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Romantic relationships do not occur in a vacuum. They begin, develop, are maintained, and change within a larger environment. The individual characteristics of couple members (e.g., their personalities, feelings of attachment) and the one-on-one interactions that couple members have with each other undoubtedly are important forces in shaping the future path of a romantic relationship, but the larger environmental context in which couples interact is vitally important as well. This environment includes both physical forces (e.g., proximity and physical setting) and social networks (e.g., family and friends) in which couples are embedded. Couples' friendships with those in their social networks may be particularly relevant determinants of what makes for a strong and stable romantic relationship (Agnew, Loving, & Drigotas, 2001; Milardo, 1982; Sprecher, Felmlee, Orbuch, & Willetts, 2002).

The most robust finding in this area of research has been that couples who have a larger percentage of shared friends (vs. individual friends) tend to have happier and longer-lasting relationships (Ackerman, 1963; Agnew et al., 2001; Milardo, 1988). By and large, these studies have focused on the structure of couples' social networks from a sociological perspective (e.g., social network overlap, density). Such studies only have indirectly addressed underlying psychological mechanisms that may explain why friendships may be beneficial for couples or how such friendships arise in the first place. The purpose of this dissertation is to examine how friendships between couples form and potential implications for within-couple processes (e.g., the effects of friendships between couples on feelings of closeness within a couple).

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

There is growing empirical evidence that shared friendships are beneficial for couples (Ackerman, 1963; Agnew et al., 2001; Milardo, 1988). From a sociological perspective, the more that couples are integrated into their social networks, the more likely they are to have happy and satisfying romantic relationships. However, it is unknown whether social networks have an inherent benefit for couples or simply that people who are happier in their relationships are more likely to make friendships with others together as a couple. By studying how friendships between couples form in a controlled laboratory setting, we may be able to better understand the processes through which friendships between couples form, and perhaps gain insight into the directionality of social network-romantic relationship quality links. For example, when two couples first meet at a cocktail party or other social gathering, why do some couples hit it off and become fast friends while others leave it at "nice to meet you"? And when couples do hit it off, are there residual benefits for the couples themselves (e.g., heightened intimacy within the relationship)?

Examining the Formation of Friendships Between Couples Using the Closeness Induction Method

One of the challenges facing researchers in this area has been finding ways to study how friendships between couples form in a controlled environment. One paradigm with great potential is Aron and colleagues' closeness induction method (Aron, Melinat, Aron, Vallone, & Bator, 1997). In this procedure, interpersonal closeness is generated between individuals through conversational activities that involve increasing levels of

self-disclosure. Sustained, escalating and reciprocal self-disclosure is one of the keys to the establishment of close relationships with others (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Derlega, Metts, Petronio, & Margulis, 1993; Laurenceau, Rivera, Shaffer, & Pietromonaco, 2004; Slatcher & Pennebaker, 2006). The core of the closeness induction method is structured self-disclosure between strangers, building on the acquaintance paradigm used in the substantial body of experimental research on self-disclosure conducted mainly in the 1970s and 1980s (e.g., Brewer & Mittelman, 1980; Chaikin, Derlega, Bayma, & Shaw, 1975).

In a typical closeness induction study, two strangers are brought into the lab to have a 45-minute get-to-know-you conversation. They are randomly assigned to be in either a closeness condition or a small talk condition. Those in the closeness condition are given questions to ask each other that are geared towards eliciting high levels of self-disclosure from the respondent and other questions geared toward creating positive affect and intimacy between the two unacquainted individuals (e.g., "What is your favorite memory?"). Those in the small talk condition are given questions to ask each other that involve very minimal amounts of self-disclosure and cover relatively unemotional topics (e.g., "Describe in detail how you make your typical breakfast (e.g., an omelet, pancakes, cereal, etc.)."). Compared to those in the small talk condition, those in the closeness condition feel much closer to each other, regardless of how much they expect to like each other or whether they agree or disagree on important topics (e.g., political attitudes) prior to the interaction. Anecdotally, Aron and his colleagues (1997) have reported that after

going through the closeness induction procedure, people often try to contact each other because they enjoyed meeting each other so much.

Although not explicitly designed for this purpose, the closeness induction method offers great promise for examining how friendships between couples are formed. Aron's original idea was to create closeness between individuals, but the method easily can be adapted to examine how closeness between couples develops. Pairs of couples could be brought into the lab and randomly assigned to the closeness condition or small talk condition. This would be akin to a first "date" between couples. Using this approach, one could examine whether it is possible to create interpersonal closeness between couples, and, if so, what the mechanisms underlying the development of closeness might be. Further, one could examine whether couple members feel closer to their own romantic partners after interacting with another couple.

When the closeness induction procedure previously has been used to create closeness between individuals, the study usually ends when the participants leave the lab (e.g., Aron et al., 1997; Kashdan & Roberts, 2006; Vorauer & Sakamoto, 2006). By using this paradigm with couples and following up with them in the days and weeks after the initial interaction, one can see whether friendships between couples actually form (or at least whether a couple proactively has been in touch with the couple they met) and perhaps get a sense of some of the mechanisms underlying the formation of friendships between couples. Possible mechanisms include how novel and exciting the interaction was, levels of disclosure, responsiveness to disclosure and a host of other factors.

Additionally, this paradigm allows one to see whether the creation of a temporary interpersonal bond between couples can lead to stronger bonds within couples.

What Leads to Closeness?

Implicit in the closeness induction paradigm is that self-disclosure drives the effects of this experimental manipulation on closeness between unacquainted individuals. Based on this premise, greater levels of self-disclosure should lead to greater feelings of closeness toward the other person (and vice versa). However, there are a number of potential paths through which through which this manipulation might exert its effects, both on feelings of closeness between couples and within couples. Below, three potential mechanisms are described.

Self-Disclosure

The first and most obvious mechanism is self-disclosure. As stated previously, self-disclosure plays a central role in the development and maintenance of relationships. In Collins and Miller's review (1994) of the self-disclosure and liking literature, they found that (a) people who engage in intimate disclosures tend to be liked more than people who disclose at lower levels, and that (b) people like others as a result of having disclosed to them. Conceptually, self-disclosure has been defined as any information about oneself that a person verbally communicates to another person (Collins & Miller, 1994; Cozby, 1973).

Interest in the effects of self-disclosure on relationship formation can be traced to the early work of Jourard (1959), who found a positive correlation between liking another person and disclosure to that person. However, this association has not always been

found to be the case. Several studies have found little or no association (e.g., Broder, 1982; Runge & Archer, 1981), and others have even demonstrated a negative relation under some conditions (e.g., Archer & Berg, 1978; Rubin, 1975). For example, although sharing personal information may signal the discloser's interest in establishing an intimate relationship with the listener (or listeners), disclosing too much information may make a person appear maladjusted (Altman & Taylor, 1973).

There are two principal theories as to why greater levels of self-disclosure may lead to greater feelings of closeness toward the discloser. The first is Altman & Taylor's (1973) social penetration theory, which suggests that relationships develop through increases in the depth and breadth of self-disclosures. According to this theory, disclosure is viewed as rewarding for the recipient because it communicates the discloser's liking and desire to initiate a more intimate relationship. The second theory is that self-disclosure leads to more positive beliefs about the discloser, which in turn leads to greater liking of the discloser (Ajzen, 1977; Collins & Miller, 1994). For example, people who disclose more intimately may be viewed as more friendly, warm and trusting. In the case of self-disclosure within the context of one couple interacting with another couple, a person's self-disclosure should lead to the other couple feeling close to that person. Previous research has focused primarily on the effects of disclosure in one-on-one interactions rather than disclosure in groups. However, in certain group contexts—such as in group therapy—self-disclosure has been found to be associated with group cohesion (Coché, Dies, & Goettelmann, 1991; Shechtman & Dvir, 2006).

Self-disclosure also can lead to feelings of closeness toward the listener (Collins & Miller, 1994; Derlega, Metts, Petronio, & Margulis, 1993). Jourard (1959) suggested that the act of self-disclosure is a personally rewarding and a necessary component of a healthy personality. He argued that positive feelings resulting from revelation of the self become associated with the recipient and lead to more liking. Pennebaker and others have shown that disclosing about stressful events through expressive writing can lead to improved physical and mental health and a host of other positive outcomes because it helps people to work through emotional issues (Pennebaker & Beall, 1986; Frattaroli, 2006). Once a person has disclosed important issues, they think about them less and can devote more resources to others in his/her social world (Klein & Boals, 2001; Pennebaker & Graybeal, 2001). For example, when couples disclose their deepest thoughts and feelings about their relationship through expressive writing, they are more likely to stay together (Slatcher & Pennebaker, 2006). However, as Taylor (1979) noted, self-disclosure is simultaneously rewarding and risky—revealing one's weaknesses and vulnerabilities to others may be quite uncomfortable or distressing. This could be particularly true in a group setting, such as in the case of disclosure in front of another couple, when one might show vulnerability not only to one's partner but to strangers as well.

Partner Responsiveness

According to Reis and Shaver (1988), interpersonal closeness is built through two primary processes: self-disclosure and partner responsiveness. The intimacy process is initiated when one partner (the speaker) communicates personally relevant and revealing

information to the other partner (the listener). In return, the listener responds with disclosures and other behaviors that are responsive to the specific content of the initial disclosure, and that convey understanding, validation, and caring for the speaker. In recent years, this model of intimacy has begun to receive empirical support, primarily from daily diary studies conducted by Laurenceau and colleagues (e.g., Laurenceau, Feldman Barrett, & Pietromonaco, 1998; Laurenceau, Rivera, Shaffer, & Pietromonaco, 2004). These studies have shown that when relationships become more intimate as a function of self-disclosure and partner responsiveness, they are more satisfying, close, and stable.

Reis and Shaver's model of intimacy is relevant to understanding how friendships between couples form. Friendships, like romantic relationships, are built on intimacy and self-disclosure (e.g., Antonucci & Akiyama, 1987; Jones, 1991; Reisman, 1990) and greater intimacy is associated with greater friendship satisfaction (Forest, 1996). When couples are out together with their friends, it is likely that they share personal and revealing information with their friends and that those friends will respond to such disclosures with varying levels of responsiveness. Such exchanges can lead to greater intimacy with friends and greater friendship satisfaction. Theoretically, this same general process should occur between unacquainted couples when given a sufficient opportunity for self-disclosure.

But what about the effects of such exchanges on couple members' relationship with each other? It is possible that greater intimacy between couples may be associated with greater intimacy, satisfaction and stability within a couple. Using Aron's closeness

induction procedure, the association between intimacy process variables (e.g., self-disclosure and partner responsiveness) and closeness within a couple can be assessed. When couples self-disclose more to other couples and those couples are responsive to such disclosures, they may feel closer toward the other couple as well as toward each other.

Of course, it is also possible that disclosure to other couples could lead to reduced intimacy within a couple, in particular if a couple's relationship is unsatisfying, unstable, or uncertain. For example, interacting with other couples might lead people to reevaluate their romantic relationship in a more negative light if they perceive other relationships to be much happier or closer than their own. Interacting with members of the opposite sex (if you are a woman, interacting with the man in the other couple, and vice versa) may also be a source of temptation for infidelity. Indeed, recent correlational research suggests that social network members may act as a source of turbulence for couples when people are feeling uncertain about their relationship (Knobloch & Donovan-Kicken, 2006).

Positive Affect

An alternative possibility for why experimentally induced disclosure might create closeness between couples and enhance closeness within couples is that it is a novel and arousing activity. A number of recent studies by Aron and colleagues suggest that couples' participation in novel and arousing activities is associated with increases in positive affect (Aron, Norman, Aron, McKenna, & Heyman, 2000; Strong & Aron, 2006). Such increases in positive affect, in turn, have been found to lead to increases in self-reported relationship quality.

The theoretical foundation for this idea is based on Aron's self-expansion model of motivation and cognition in close relationships (Aron, Aron, & Norman, 2001). According to this model, when two people begin a relationship, each begins to "include the other in the self." Inclusion of other in the self describes a process by which one begins to identify his or her self-image as a new combination with the other's self. The partner's identity, his or her beliefs, feelings, ideology, resources and personality begin to become associated with one's own self. By associating such unique aspects of one's partner to one's already defined self, the self expands to include these new aspects of the partner. This process of self-expansion typically takes place through mutual self-disclosure, time spent with partner, shared activities, and common ideas and interests (Strong & Aron, 2006). Such activities, particularly during the beginning stages of a relationship, are associated with rapid increases in self-expansion and concurrent increases in positive affect—indicated by feelings of great pleasure, arousal and excitement (Aron et al., 2001). In the same fashion, when one couple interacts with another couple, the interaction may be novel and arousing and lead couple members to include the other couple in their own self concepts, leading to self-expansion. Recent research suggests that interactions between groups indeed can be self-expanding if such interactions are positive (Aron & Wright, 2007).

When two couples interact in an intense, self-disclosing fashion, rapid expansion of the self may be particularly strong after the initial exhilaration of a new relationship starts to wane. Take, for example, relationship partners who have been dating for a year and have become more and more accustomed to each other as their relationship has

progressed. The two people, once very fresh and exciting to each other, seem less and less novel and self-expansion slows or comes to a halt. At this point, people often become bored and dissatisfied in their relationship (Aron & Aron, 1986)—the relationship may begin to fizzle. Self-expansion theory suggests that, in long-term couples at least, relationship quality is maintained—and even enhanced—primarily through rapid self-expansion through engaging in novel and arousing activities that are associated with one's partner (Aron, Norman, Aron, & Lewandowski, 2002). For these couples, spending quality time with another couple may be one novel and arousing activity that leads to greater self-expansion and enhanced relationship quality. Self-disclosure to another couple may break the monotony of everyday routine, leading not only to the inclusion of the other couple into one's self concept, but greater inclusion of one's partner into the self concept as well.

Self-expansion theory suggests that novel activities—such as the first meeting of another couple—create strong positive affect, which becomes associated with one's partner through positive reinforcement, in turn leading to enhanced relationship quality. The first link in this proposed *meeting another couple→positive affect→relationship quality* chain of associations is suggested in series of two daily experience sampling studies conducted by Larson and colleagues (Larson & Bradney, 1988; Larson, Mannell, & Zuzanek, 1986). In these studies, participants reported their highest levels of positive affect when they were engaging in activities with their spouses and friends together, compared to activities alone, with spouse only or with friends only. These studies unfortunately did not directly examine the effects of time spent with friends on

relationship quality. Nevertheless, they provide preliminary evidence that increases in positive affect may be one mechanism through which friendships with other couples are positively associated with relationship quality.

Overview of the Current Study and Research Questions

In the current study, 30 pairs of unacquainted heterosexual couples (N = 60 couples total) in committed dating relationships were randomly assigned to one of two conditions where they engaged in a 45-minute interaction. In the closeness condition, 15 pairs of couples carried out self-disclosure tasks that gradually escalated in intensity. The procedure used was a modified version of the closeness induction task developed by Aron and colleagues (Aron et al., 1997) to generate interpersonal closeness between individual strangers—in this case modified to generate closeness between couples. In the control condition, 15 pairs of couples engaged in non-emotional small talk discussions.

Measures were administered before and after the experimental manipulation to assess feelings of closeness and liking toward the other couple, measures of romantic relationship quality, and measures assessing mediating mechanisms of the effects of the manipulation on feelings of closeness between and within couples. One day later and one month later, participants were asked to complete very brief online follow-up measures to assess long-term effects of the manipulation on perceptions of the other couple, feelings of closeness toward romantic partners, and whether or not they had contacted the other couple.

Using the above design, the following research questions were explored:

Research Question 1: Is it possible to create closeness between couples in the lab?

The primary research question that this dissertation will address is whether it is possible to generate closeness between couples using the closeness induction method. To explore this question, participants were asked—immediately after the interaction with the other couple—the extent to which they felt close to the other couple, how much they liked the other couple, how much they liked interacting with each individual member of the other couple, and other items assessing interaction quality. The 1-day and 1-month follow-ups contained items addressing the quality of the interaction and, more importantly, whether couples contacted each other or met up with each other in the time since their initial meeting. This design made it possible to preliminarily explore precursors of friendships between couples, such as whether couples who attempt to form friendships with other couples are happier in their relationships to begin with than those who do not.

Research Question 2: Does the process of creating closeness between couples lead to greater closeness within couples?

The second research question addresses whether there are residual benefits for couples themselves derived from the closeness induction procedure. To explore this question, couples were asked to complete measures immediately after the interaction assessing: 1) how close they currently felt to their partner, 2) how satisfied they currently were in their relationship, and 3) how passionately in love they currently were with their partner; each of these measures controlled for baseline relationship quality. Although this type of manipulation is geared toward creating closeness, it is also possible that other aspects of relationship quality—such as passionate love and relationship satisfaction—

also might be enhanced. In addition to these measures, couples were asked at the 1-day and 1-month follow-up to indicate how close they had felt to their partner in the time since initially taking part in the study.

Research Question 3: What are some of the mechanisms through which the development of closeness between couples occurs?

The third research question addresses possible mediators underlying the effects of the closeness induction method on feelings of closeness toward the other couple and mechanisms underlying effects of the manipulation on subsequent contact between the couples. The primary mediators examined were self-disclosure, responsiveness to disclosure, positive affect and novelty. Additionally, the broader question of how the effects of individuals in couples (e.g., the likeability of the male and the likeability of the female) are associated with how close one couple feels to another couple was examined.

Research Question 4: What are Some of the Mechanisms That Mediate the Effects of the Manipulation on Closeness Within Couples?

This final research question addresses possible mediators underlying the effects of the experimental manipulation on feelings of closeness to one's own romantic partner. Theoretically, the processes underlying how closeness between couples develops should be similar—or at least involve the same general types of processes—to how closeness between individuals develops. Thus, the same mediators examined above for the between-couple effects—self-disclosure, responsiveness to disclosure, positive affect and novelty—also were examined for the within-couple effects. In addition, whether the effect of the manipulation on closeness within couples is due to simply learning new

things about one's partner was explored. No specific a priori hypotheses were made because it was unclear—due to the fact that this paradigm has never been used with pairs of couples before—how exactly these processes would affect the outcome variables of interest.

Chapter 2: Method

Participants

Couples in dating relationships were recruited from flyers posted on or nearby the campus of the University of Texas at Austin and from advertisements posted on the websites *Craig's List* and *Facebook*. Couples were told that they would be participating in a study looking at "factors that affect relationships," and were recruited on the basis that they were unmarried and had been dating their partner for at least 1 year. Each couple was paid $20 for participating in the study.

Of the 161 couples who responded to the posted advertisements, 101 did not participate in the study for the following reasons: 11 had scheduling problems that could not be resolved (e.g., work, school, one partner living out of town); 11 did not show up for the study and were unwilling to reschedule; 5 broke up before taking part in the study; 4 were in lesbian relationships (and would have been included had enough lesbian couples signed up); 4 felt that the monetary compensation was not great enough; 2 were engaged; 1 was married; 1 was dating for less than one year; 1 was too young (under 18); 61 chose not to participate for undisclosed reasons. A total of 60 couples came to the lab and completed the lab activities at Time I.

Participants ranged in age from 19 to 26 (M = 20.83, SD = 1.73); there was no significant difference in age between men and women in the sample. The ethic make-up of the sample was representative of students at the University of Texas—62.5% White/Caucasian; 16.7% Asian; 14.2% Hispanic/Latino; 1.7% Black/African American;

5% Other. Couples had been dating from 1 to 5 years (M = 2.04, SD = 1.05) and indicated that they either were in a serious dating relationship (85.8%) or life partnership (14.2%); none were married or had children.

Of the 120 participants who came to the lab at Time I, none had any missing Time I data. There were almost no dropouts for Time II (next day follow-up), with 116 participants (97%) completing the Time II follow-up measure. There also were relatively few dropouts for Time III (1 month follow-up), with 103 participants (86%) taking part in that follow-up. Attrition analyses for Time III are presented in the results section.

Baseline Measures

Relationship quality. In order to capture a wide range of facets of relationship quality, baseline and post-interaction measures were chosen to tap broad constructs of closeness, relationship satisfaction and passionate love. Slightly different measures were used at baseline and post-interaction so that participants' post-interaction questionnaire responses would not be biased by their previous responses on the baseline questionnaires.

Baseline closeness was measured using Sternberg's (1997) Intimacy Scale (SIS). The SIS contains 12 seven-point Likert-type scale items based on the intimacy aspect of Sternberg's triangular theory of love (e.g., "I feel that my partner really understands me," and "I have a warm relationship with my partner") and has shown good internal consistency. The SIS correlates moderately with other measures of closeness and intimacy (Aron, Aron, & Smollan, 1992). Internal consistency (ICC [2, k]) for the SIS in this sample was .86.

Relationship satisfaction was measured using Hendrick's (1988) Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS). The RAS is a validated measure of relationship satisfaction that has been shown to have good internal reliability and to correlate strongly with measures of love, commitment, investment and dyadic adjustment. The RAS consists of 7 items on a 5-point Likert-type scale such as, "In general, how satisfied are you with your relationship?" Internal consistency (ICC [2, k]) for the RAS in this sample was .83.

Feelings of passionate love at baseline were assessed using the first 15 items of the long version of Hatfield and Sprecher's (1986) Passionate Love Scale (PLS). The PLS is a 30-item measure of thoughts, feelings and behaviors characteristic of passionate love on a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*Untrue*) to 6 (*True*). Example items include, "Since I've been involved with my partner, my emotions have been on a roller coaster," and, "I feel happy when I am doing something to make my partner happy." The PLS has been shown to have high internal reliability and moderately correlates with other measures of love, commitment and satisfaction (Hatfield & Sprecher, 1986). It is also one of the few love measures that is not focused on companionate-type love. Internal consistency (ICC [2, k]) for the baseline measure of the PLS in this sample was .83.

Positive affect. Baseline positive affect was measured using the Vigor subscale of the Profile of Mood States (POMS; McNair, Lorr, & Droppleman, 1971). This subscale of the POMS contains 8 feeling descriptors such as "lively," "active," and "energetic" on a scale from 0 (*not at all*) to 4 (*extremely*) and is a broad measure of trait-level positive affect. The scale has been found to correlate strongly with other measures of positive affect such as the PANAS (Watson & Clark, 1994) and has exhibited very good internal

consistency. Internal consistency (ICC [2, k]) for the POMS Vigor subscale in this sample was .84.

Big 5 personality traits. To assess whether any effects of the experimental manipulation might be moderated by personality variables, participants also competed self-ratings of the Big 5 traits using the 44-item Big Five Inventory (BFI; John & Srivastava, 1999). The BFI shows high convergent validity with other measures of the Big 5. BFI items are rated on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*disagree strongly*) to 7 (*agree strongly*). The internal consistencies (ICC [2, k]) for BFI in this sample were .89, .80, .78, .76, and .82 for extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness, respectively.

Post-Interaction Measures

Closeness with the other couple. Closeness with the other couple was measured using a tailored version of Aron et al.'s (1992) Inclusion of Other in the Self Scale (IOS). The standard IOS consists of seven pairs of circles labeled "Self" and "Other" that overlap to various degrees, creating a 7-point interval scale. Respondents choose the pair that they feel best describes their relationship. The IOS has exhibited high test-retest and alternate-form reliability (.85 and .92, respectively) and convergent and discriminant validity with other measures of closeness and intimacy. In this case, the measure was altered so that each of the seven pairs of circles was labeled "My partner and I" and "The other couple."

Liking of the other couple. The extent to which participants liked the other couple with whom they interacted was measured using an adapted version of Rubin's

(1970) Liking Scale (LS). The LS is a validated 13-item measure of liking that directly assesses the affective ties between people. It contains items such as, "[Friend] is one of the most likeable people I know." In the current study, "Friend" was simply replaced with "This couple" for each item on the scale (e.g., "This couple is one of the most likable couples I know.") The scale has shown good internal reliability and correlates moderately with other measures of liking, in particular when it is used to assess liking of acquaintances, rather than close friends or romantic partners (Berscheid, Snyder, & Omoto, 1989). Internal consistency (ICC [2, k]) for the LS in this sample was .94.

Enjoyment of interacting with each individual in other couple. In order to explore the extent to which participants' feelings of closeness toward the other couple were driven by how much they enjoyed interacting with each individual member of the other couple, two brief 6-item measures were constructed—one to assess how much participants enjoyed interacting with the woman in the other couple, the other to assess how much participants enjoyed interacting with the male in the other couple. These scales may be found in Appendix A and Appendix B, respectively. The items were constructed to reflect how much participants liked and felt close to the other participants, thought they were fun, enjoyed hanging out with them, and would like to hang out with them again. The scales were identical for male and female interaction partners with the exception of the identifiers used to designate gender. Although this scale has not previously been validated, it has good face validity as a measure of interaction enjoyment and shows excellent internal consistency (ICCs [2, k]) of .93 and .95 for the male and female measures, respectively).

Relationship quality. Post-interaction closeness with romantic partners was measured using the standard version of Aron et al.'s (1992) Inclusion of Other in the Self Scale (IOS). As stated previously, the IOS consists of seven pairs of circles labeled "Self" and "Other" that overlap to various degrees, creating a 7-point interval scale. Respondents choose the pair that they feel best describes their relationship. In addition to exhibiting high test-retest and alternate-form reliability and convergent and discriminant validity with other measures of closeness and intimacy, it also has been shown to be a good predictor of relationship stability—as good as or better than several longer and more elaborate measures of closeness (Aron et al., 1992).

The post-interaction measure of relationship satisfaction used in this study was the Marital Opinion Questionnaire (MOQ; Huston, McHale, and Crouter, 1986). The MOQ is a 10-item semantic differential scale plus a global question assessing overall relationship satisfaction. Respondents characterize their relationship in terms of a list of bipolar adjectives such as "miserable-enjoyable," with four points separating the two end points—thus making a 6-point scale. The global question asks, "All things considered, how satisfied or dissatisfied have you been with your relationship over the past TWO months, with 1 being completely dissatisfied and 6 being completely satisfied?" The internal reliability of the scale has been shown to be excellent; in this sample, the ICC [2, k] was .87.

Post-interaction passionate love was measured using the last 15 items of the long version of the PLS. As described previously, the PLS has been shown to have high internal reliability and moderately correlates with other measures of love, commitment

and satisfaction, and is one of the few love measures that is not focused on companionate-type love. Internal consistency (ICC [2, k]) in this sample was .87.

Intimacy process variables: self-disclosure and perceived responsiveness. Self-disclosure and perceived responsiveness were measured using items developed previously for intimacy process studies conducted by Laurenceau and colleagues (e.g., Laurenceau et al., 2004). Responses to all of these items were on 5-point Likert-type scales (1 = *very little*, 5 = *a great deal*). Participants' self-disclosure was measured using the following three items: 1) the degree to which they disclosed facts and information; 2) the degree to which they disclosed their thoughts 3) the degree to which they disclosed their feelings. Perceived responsiveness of the other others in the interaction (including the female and the male in the other couple as well as romantic partner) was measured using the following three items: 1) the degree to which he/she felt understood by X (the other female/the other male/romantic partner), 2) the degree to which he/she felt validated by X (the other female/the other male/romantic partner), 3) the degree to which he/she felt X (the other female/the other male/romantic partner) was caring. Internal consistency (ICC [2, k]) was .93 for the self-disclosure measure and .80, .82 and .80 for the other female responsiveness, other male responsiveness, and romantic partner responsiveness measures, respectively.

Positive affect. Post-interaction positive affect was measured using the positive affect subscale of the Positive Affect and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). The positive affect scale on the PANAS is made up of ten items (e.g., "interested," "strong") on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*extremely*).

Participants are instructed to "read each item and, using the scale below, indicate the degree to which you feel this way right now." The internal reliability of for this scale has been shown to be very good, with an ICC [2, k] in the current sample of .93.

Novelty of interaction. Previous research examining the effects of novel and arousing activities on self-expansion (Aron et al., 2000; Strong & Aron, 2006) often has confounded the effects of novelty and arousal. When measures of novelty have been used, they have been single-item measures that typically are used only as manipulation checks. Although the underlying assumption is that both novelty and arousal (e.g., positive affect) mediate the effects of novel and arousing activities on self-expansion, this idea never has been directly tested. In order to test the idea that novelty (in addition to positive affect) mediates expansion of the self (as measured by closeness to the other couple and closeness to one's partner), a multi-item scale of novelty was constructed. This scale may be found in Appendix C. While not externally validated as a measure of novelty, the measure is face valid and shows an acceptable level of internal consistency (ICC [2, k] = .72 in the current sample).

Newly-learned knowledge about one's partner. In order to explore whether increased closeness within couples might merely be a function of learning new information about one's partner, a single-item question on a 9-point Likert-type scale asked, "To what extent do you feel as though you gained new knowledge about your partner today?"

Time II and Time III Measures

Because participants' involvement in the follow-up portions of the study was completely voluntary, the Time II and Time III measures were designed to be very short to reduce attrition. Items were chosen to be as broad and encompassing as possible. The first item assessed, on a 9-point scale (1 = *not at all*, 9 = *a great deal*), the extent to which the participant had talked about the interaction with his/her romantic partner after the study had ended. The second item assessed, on a 9-point scale (1 = *definitely not*, 9 = *definitely yes*), interest in "hanging out" with the other couple again in the future. The third item assessed, on a 9-point scale (1 = *not at all*, 9 = *very much*), the hope that the other couple stays together in the future. The fourth item assessed, on a 9-point scale (1 = *not at all*, 9 = *very much*), how much participants thought the other couple hoped that their relationship would stay together. The fifth item was the IOS scale, used to assess closeness with one's romantic partner. Items 2-4 also were included in the Time I measures in order to look at changes over time in perceptions of the other couple.

In addition to these items, the Time III questionnaire contained an item asking whether the respondent or their romantic partner had been in contact with the other couple since the study ended; this item was at the couple level to maximize statistical power in case of high attrition and/or low frequency of contact between couples at Time III. Finally, an item was included at Time III asking whether participants and their partners had actually met in person with the other couple since the study ended. Copies of the Time II and Time III measures may be found in Appendix D and Appendix E, respectively.

Procedure

Couples came into the lab in pairs. On couples' arrival to the lab, the experimenter—an undergraduate research assistant—checked to make sure that the pairs of couples did not know each other; none did. After getting informed consent from couples, the experimenter led each person to one of four separate rooms to fill out online baseline questionnaires. Next, both couples were brought into a room together to engage in one of two types of discussion tasks (described below); the instructions for these tasks were delivered by the experimenter. Afterwards, couples filled out online post-interaction questionnaires; all measures at baseline and after the interaction were counterbalanced to prevent order effects. Couples then were paid and dismissed from the lab. They neither were encouraged nor discouraged from contacting the other couple after completion of the study.

The next day, participants were contacted individually via email and asked to complete a very brief online measure assessing their perceptions of the other couple, feelings toward their own partner and the extent to which they talked about the interaction with the other couple over the past 24 hours. All but 4 participants (1 in the closeness condition and 3 in the small talk condition) completed the next-day measure. One month later, participants were contacted to fill out a final online measure, again assessing their perceptions of the other couple, feelings toward their own partner and the extent to which they talked about the interaction with the other couple over the past month. Additionally, they were asked whether they or their romantic partner had been in contact with and met up with other couple. In the small talk condition, 50 out of 60 had complete data sets at all three time points; in the closeness condition, 53 out of 60 had

complete data sets at all three time points. Further, at least one member of every couple had completed both follow-up measures. If only one member of a couple provided data, then that person's data was included the analysis and his/her partner's data was treated as missing data for that time point. Participation at Time II and Time III was completely voluntary and unpaid.

Experimental Manipulation: Discussion Topic (closeness or small talk)

After completing baseline measures, the pairs of couples were randomly assigned to engage in either a closeness-inducing discussion or a small talk discussion for 45 minutes. This task originally was developed by Aron and colleagues (1997) to produce interpersonal closeness between individual strangers. After being brought into a room with two sets of comfortable chairs, one couple member was given a packet with three sets of slips. The experimenter then read the task instructions aloud to the group; these instructions may be found in Appendix F. These basic initial instructions were the same for both the closeness and small talk conditions.

After reading the instructions, couples began at once with the first Set I slip. After 15 minutes, the experimenter would come in the room to tell the couples to stop, put away the Set I slips, and begin Set II; after another 15 minutes, to begin Set III; and after a final 15 minutes, to stop completely. In the closeness condition, the slips called for self-disclosure or other intimacy-associated behaviors, with the intensity of the tasks gradually increasing (three sets are used so that pairs of couples who go slowly through the tasks will do at least some of the fairly intense Set III tasks). Examples of some of these instructions include, "For what in your life do you feel the most grateful?" and,

"Given the choice of anyone in the world, whom would you want as a dinner guest?" The interaction questions for those in the closeness-inducing condition may be found in Appendix G.

Those in the small talk control condition similarly went through three sets of instruction slips, but, in this condition, instructions focused on everyday, unemotional activities involving very little personal disclosure and the reading to each other of unemotional passages from *The Federalist Papers* and *Charles Dickens*. Examples of some of the questions in the small talk condition include, "When was the last time you walked for more than an hour? Describe where you went and what you saw," and, "What are the advantages and disadvantages of reading something online on the web vs. reading a hard paper copy? Each person please give one advantage and one disadvantage for each." After the 45-minute interaction sessions came to an end, participants were separated to complete post-interaction questionnaires in individual lab rooms. They then were paid and dismissed from the lab.

Chapter 3: Results

Overall, this study has five general classes of variables. The first class deals with the pre-interaction measures of relationship duration and relationship quality, which were analyzed to determine any differences between the two experimental conditions at baseline. The second class of variables addresses Research Question 1—whether the experimental manipulation led to greater feelings of closeness between couples. The third class addresses Research Question 2—whether the experimental manipulation led to greater feelings of closeness toward one's own romantic partner. The fourth class of variables addresses Research Question 3—exploring possible mediators of the effects of the manipulation on closeness between couples. The final class of variables addresses Research Question 4—exploring possible mediators of the effects of the manipulation on closeness within couples. Results addressing Research Questions 1 and 2 are further subdivided into analyses of data from Time I (immediately following the interaction), Time II (one day after the interaction), and Time III (one month after the interaction) and are presented chronologically.

Baseline Measures

As shown in Table 1, couples did not differ between conditions in length of time dating, passionate love (PLS) or positive affect (POMS). However, there was a trend of couples in the small talk condition having slightly higher levels of relationship satisfaction (RAS) compared to those in the small talk condition. Those in the small talk condition felt significantly closer (SIS) to their romantic partners than did those in the closeness condition.

Table 1 - Baseline Measure Descriptives and T-tests

Measure	Experimental Condition	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*	Cohen's *d*
Length of time dating partner	Small Talk	60	2.01	1.00	0.32	0.747	0.06
	Closeness	60	2.07	1.11			
Sternberg Intimacy Scale (SIS)	Small Talk	60	6.72	0.35	2.19	0.031	0.40
	Closeness	60	6.55	0.51			
Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS)	Small Talk	60	4.58	0.41	1.52	0.130	0.30
	Closeness	60	4.45	0.54			
Passionate Love Scale (PLS)	Small Talk	60	5.02	0.57	0.10	0.917	0.02
	Closeness	60	5.01	0.62			
POMS Vigor subscale	Small Talk	60	18.87	5.14	0.63	0.530	0.12
	Closeness	60	18.23	5.87			

RESEARCH QUESTION 1: IS IT POSSIBLE TO CREATE CLOSENESS BETWEEN COUPLES IN THE LAB?

Time I Descriptive Statistics and T-tests for Between-Couple Outcome Variables

As shown in Table 2, participants in the closeness condition felt closer to the other couples they interacted with than did those in the small talk condition. The mean for those in the small talk condition was roughly the same as found in Aron and his colleagues' (1997) original validation study of this procedure with individuals (mean in that study was 3.35); the mean in the closeness condition in this study was higher than that found by Aron (means in his validation studies ranging from 3.75 to 4.06). Those in the closeness condition liked the other couples more than did those in the control condition and wanted to "hang out" with the other couples more in the future.

Table 2 – Time I Descriptives and T-tests of Between-Couple Outcome Variables

Measure	Experimental condition	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*T*	*p*	Cohen's *d*
Inclusion of Other in the Self (IOS)-Closeness with other couple	Small Talk	60	3.35	1.39	5.68	0.000	1.05
	Closeness	60	4.75	1.31			
Rubin Scale - Liking of other couple	Small Talk	60	5.70	1.42	5.42	0.000	1.00
	Closeness	60	7.00	1.19			
Enjoyed interacting with female in other couple	Small Talk	60	5.34	1.23	6.78	0.000	1.25
	Closeness	60	6.83	1.18			
Enjoyed interacting with male in other couple	Small Talk	60	5.18	1.42	5.26	0.000	0.97
	Closeness	60	6.54	1.40			
Interest in hanging out with this couple again in the future	Small Talk	60	4.97	2.19	4.71	0.000	0.87
	Closeness	60	6.68	1.79			
Hope that the other couple stays together in the future	Small Talk	60	7.28	1.62	4.02	0.000	0.74
	Closeness	60	8.27	0.99			
How much you think the other couple hopes you and your partner stay together	Small Talk	60	6.90	1.46	5.31	0.000	0.98
	Closeness	60	8.13	1.08			

On an individual level, those in the closeness condition enjoyed interacting with the female in the other couple more, and enjoyed interacting with the male in the other couple more than those in the small talk condition did. There were gender differences within the closeness condition—women in the closeness condition enjoyed interacting with the female in the other couple ($M = 7.38$; $SD = 0.87$) more than their male romantic partners did ($M = 6.28$; $SD = 1.20$), $t(58) = 4.04$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.06$.

In addition, those in the closeness condition hoped that the other couple would stay together in the future more than those in the small talk condition did; couples in the closeness condition also thought that the other couple would hope that they (the respondent and their partner) would stay together in the future more than those in the small talk condition did. This suggests that, compared to couples in the small talk condition, couples in the closeness condition were more committed to the success of the

other couple and thought that the other couple was more committed to their relationship success.

In many ways, Research Question 1 is a manipulation check. Based on previous findings using the closeness induction method with individuals, one would expect couples in the closeness condition to feel closer to and generally enjoy interacting with the other couples more than those in the small talk condition. However, it is difficult to convey the power of this manipulation with statistical analyses. Based on observations made during and after the experimental session, the majority of couples in the closeness condition enjoyed their interaction with the other couples immensely and seemed to be on a path toward real friendship. Almost without exception, couples in the closeness condition were overheard laughing during certain points of their interaction and were quiet, serious and engaged at other points. On several occasions, when the experimenter went in to request that couples in the closeness condition stop what they were doing and go on to the next set of slips, she was chastised for interrupting and given looks of disappointment. Similar moments occurred at the end of the 45-minute interaction, when couples were asked to separate. Couples in the closeness condition often balked at this request, asking for more time to discuss whatever topic they had at that moment; many simply did not want to leave or end their conversation with the other couple. Further, after being dismissed from the lab, several couples were seen outside exchanging cell phone information. In contrast, almost every couple in the small talk condition seemed ready to depart and emotionally neutral at the end of the experiment; none were seen exchanging information with the other couples after the study.

RESEARCH QUESTION 2: DOES THE PROCESS OF CREATING CLOSENESS BETWEEN COUPLES LEAD TO GREATER CLOSENESS WITHIN COUPLES?

Independent samples t-tests were conducted to determine any effects of condition on the within-couple outcome variables. Prior to analyses, the mean for the post-interaction closeness with romantic partner measure (IOS) was adjusted to control for baseline closeness by summing the unstandardized residuals of the IOS regressed on baseline relationship closeness (SIS) to the IOS grand mean. Similarly, the mean for post-interaction relationship satisfaction (MOQ) was adjusted to control for baseline satisfaction (RAS) and the mean for the passionate love measure (the 2nd half of the PLS) was adjusted to control for baseline passionate love (the 1st half of the PLS). This approach is mathematically identical to simply analyzing the raw unstandardized residuals; the advantage of adding the residuals to the grand mean for each measure is that the means are interpretable.

As shown in Table 3, controlling for baseline IOS closeness, those in the closeness condition felt closer to their romantic partners than did those in the small talk condition. Thus, in addition to making couples feel closer to the other couples, the experimental manipulation also made couples feel closer to their own romantic partners. This finding is particularly striking considering that the mean romantic partner closeness for participants in both conditions was greater than 6 on a 7 point scale—a large ceiling effect. Anecdotally, participants in the closeness condition often were seen holding hands and smiling at their romantic partners—physically closer to each other—during and after the interaction, much more so than those in the small talk condition.

Table 3 – Time I Descriptives and T-tests of Within-Couple Outcome Variables

Measure	Experimental condition	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*T*	*p*	Cohen's *d*
Inclusion of Other in the Self (IOS) - Closeness with romantic partner	Small Talk	60	6.37	0.80	2.02	0.046	0.39
	Closeness	60	6.63	0.58			
Marital Opinion Questionnaire (MOQ)	Small Talk	60	5.46	0.29	0.24	0.808	0.04
	Closeness	60	5.48	0.36			
Passionate Love Scale (PLS)	Small Talk	60	5.08	0.30	1.25	0.212	0.23
	Closeness	60	5.15	0.36			

Note. The mean for the IOS with romantic partner measure is adjusted to control for baseline SIS. Similarly, the mean for MOQ is adjusted to control for baseline RAS scores and the mean for the PLS is adjusted to control for baseline PLS scores (baseline for the PLS was the 1st half of the PLS items, while post-interaction PLS was the 2nd half of the items).

Although couples in the closeness condition felt closer to their romantic partners, they did not feel significantly more satisfied in their romantic relationship (MOQ), nor did they feel significantly more passionately in love with their romantic partners (PLS) compared to those in the small talk condition.

Time I Descriptive Statistics and T-tests for Process Variables

To get an initial sense of whether the process variables included in the post-interaction measures might indeed mediate the effects of the experimental manipulation on the main outcome variables of interest, independent samples t-tests were conducted on the process variables. The results of these analyses are described below.

As shown in Table 4, not surprisingly, those in the closeness condition disclosed much more in their interactions than those in the small talk condition did and perceived greater responsiveness to their disclosure from the others in the group. This was true for responsiveness from the female in the other couple, for responsiveness from the male in

the other couple, and for responsiveness from one's own romantic partner. There were gender differences in the extent to which participants perceived responsiveness from the female in the other couple—females in the closeness condition found the other females to be more responsive to their disclosures ($M = 7.21$; $SD = 1.16$) than the men did ($M = 6.36$; $SD = 1.30$, $t(58) = 2.69$, $p < .01$, $d = .71$).

Table 4 - Time I Descriptives and T-tests of Process Variables

Measure	Experimental condition	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*	Cohen's *d*
Self-disclosure	Small Talk	60	5.33	1.64	6.76	0.000	1.24
	Closeness	60	7.25	1.46			
Other female's responsiveness to your disclosure	Small Talk	60	5.33	1.55	5.57	0.000	1.03
	Closeness	60	6.78	1.29			
Other male's responsiveness to your disclosure	Small Talk	60	5.01	1.62	5.40	0.000	0.99
	Closeness	60	6.48	1.35			
Romantic partner responsiveness to your disclosure	Small Talk	60	7.07	1.46	3.12	0.002	0.57
	Closeness	60	7.82	1.13			
PANAS Positive Affect	Small Talk	60	4.31	1.28	4.65	0.000	0.86
	Closeness	60	5.26	0.91			
Novelty of interaction	Small Talk	60	6.07	1.57	4.17	0.000	0.78
	Closeness	60	7.23	1.46			
Learned new things about romantic partner	Small Talk	60	2.63	1.68	3.72	0.000	0.68
	Closeness	60	4.12	2.59			

Those in the closeness condition also reported higher levels of positive affect after the interaction and reported that the interaction was more novel than those in the small talk condition did. Thus, the interaction was more novel and arousing for those in the closeness condition, which is considered to be a necessary precursor of self-expansion in the context of close relationships (Aron et al., 2000; Strong & Aron, 2006).

Finally, those in the closeness condition reported that they learned more new things about their romantic partner during the interaction than those in the small talk condition did. However, both groups scored below the mid-point of 5 on this scale, in

essence signaling that people learned very few new things about their partners though this exercise, regardless of condition.

Time I Results Summary

The results from Time I showed large between-condition differences for all of the measures relating to how couples felt about the couples with whom they interacted (Research Question 1); couples in the closeness condition felt much closer to and enjoyed interacting with the other couples much more than those in the small talk condition. In addition, couples in the closeness condition felt closer to their own partners after interacting with the other couples compared to those in the small talk condition (Research Question 2); there were no differences in post-interaction relationship satisfaction or passionate love between the two conditions. Initial analyses of potential process variables showed that, compared to those in the small talk condition, couples in the closeness condition disclosed more, felt as though their conversational partners were more responsive to them, reported higher levels of positive affect, thought the interaction was more novel, and felt as though they had learned more new things about their romantic partners.

Time II – Descriptive Statistics and T-tests

As described previously, 57 out of 60 participants in the small talk condition completed the follow-up measure the day after interacting with the other couple; 59 out of 60 in the follow-up condition completed it. Independent samples t-tests were conducted to determine any effects of condition on the follow-up measures. These analyses are presented below.

As shown in Table 5, couples in the closeness condition did not differ from those in the small talk condition in how much they talked about the interaction with the other couple in the 24 hours since interacting with them. However, as with Time I, couples in the closeness condition were more interested in hanging out with the other couple again in the future, hoped more that the other couple would stay together in the future, and thought that the other couple would hope more that they (the respondent and their partner) would stay together in the future compared to those in the small talk condition. Those in the closeness condition did not feel significantly felt closer to their romantic partners the day after the study than those in the small talk condition did. The only gender difference was for the item asking about hope that the other couple stays together. On this item, the women gave higher ratings ($M = 7.83$; $SD = 1.23$) than the men did ($M = 6.79$; $SD = 2.00$; $t(57) = 2.39$, $p = .02$, $d = .63$).

Table 5 – Time II (Next Day) Item Descriptives and T-tests

Item	Experimental condition	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*	Cohen's *d*
Amount of talk about the other couple after the study was finished	Small Talk	57	6.04	1.78	0.41	0.686	0.08
	Closeness	59	6.17	1.78			
Interest in hanging out with this couple again in the future	Small Talk	57	4.67	2.12	3.21	0.002	0.60
	Closeness	59	5.90	2.01			
Hope that the other couple stays together in the future	Small Talk	57	6.26	1.90	3.14	0.002	0.59
	Closeness	59	7.32	1.73			
How much you think other couple hopes you and your partner stay together	Small Talk	57	5.60	2.04	3.86	0.000	0.72
	Closeness	59	7.03	1.96			
Inclusion of Other in the Self (IOS) – closeness with romantic partner	Small Talk	57	6.14	0.86	1.39	0.167	0.26
	Closeness	59	6.39	1.05			

Note. The mean for the IOS with romantic partner measure is adjusted to control for baseline SIS scores.

Time II Results Summary

The day after completing the study, couples generally felt the same way toward the other couples as they had the day before. Compared to couples in the small talk condition, couples in the closeness condition were more inclined to want to hang out with the other couples, root for them to succeed, and think that the other couples were rooting for them to succeed. However, couples in both conditions spoke about the interaction with the couples at equal amounts in the 24 hours following the interaction and felt equally close to their romantic partners.

Time III – Descriptive Statistics and T-tests

As described previously, out of the 60 participants in the small talk condition, 50 completed the follow-up measure one month after interacting with the other couple; 53 out of 60 in the closeness condition completed it. Of those, all had completed the Time II measures as well. Attrition analyses detected no differences in any Time I measures (both at baseline and post-interaction) between those who completed the Time III measures and those who did not. Independent samples t-tests were conducted to determine effects of condition on the Time III follow-up measures. These analyses are presented below.

As shown in Table 6, couples in the closeness condition talked significantly more to each other about the couple they had met in the month after initially taking part in the study than did those in the small talk condition. As with Times I and II, couples in the closeness condition were more interested in hanging out with the other couple again in the future, hoped more that the other couple would stay together in the future and thought that the other couple would hope more that they (the respondent and their partner)

Table 6 – Time III (Month Later) Item Descriptives and T-tests

Item	Experimental condition	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*	Cohen's *d*
Amount of talk about the other couple after the study was finished	Small Talk	50	1.58	0.78	3.89	0.000	0.77
	Closeness	53	3.00	2.47			
Interest in hanging out with this couple again in the future	Small Talk	50	3.24	1.87	4.88	0.000	0.97
	Closeness	53	5.21	2.20			
Hope that the other couple stays together in the future	Small Talk	50	5.64	2.17	4.44	0.000	0.88
	Closeness	53	7.30	1.60			
How much you think the other couple hopes you and your partner stay together	Small Talk	50	4.98	2.04	5.07	0.000	1.01
	Closeness	53	6.91	1.82			
Inclusion of Other in the Self (IOS) - Closeness with romantic partner	Small Talk	50	5.65	1.36	1.73	0.086	0.34
	Closeness	53	6.08	1.11			

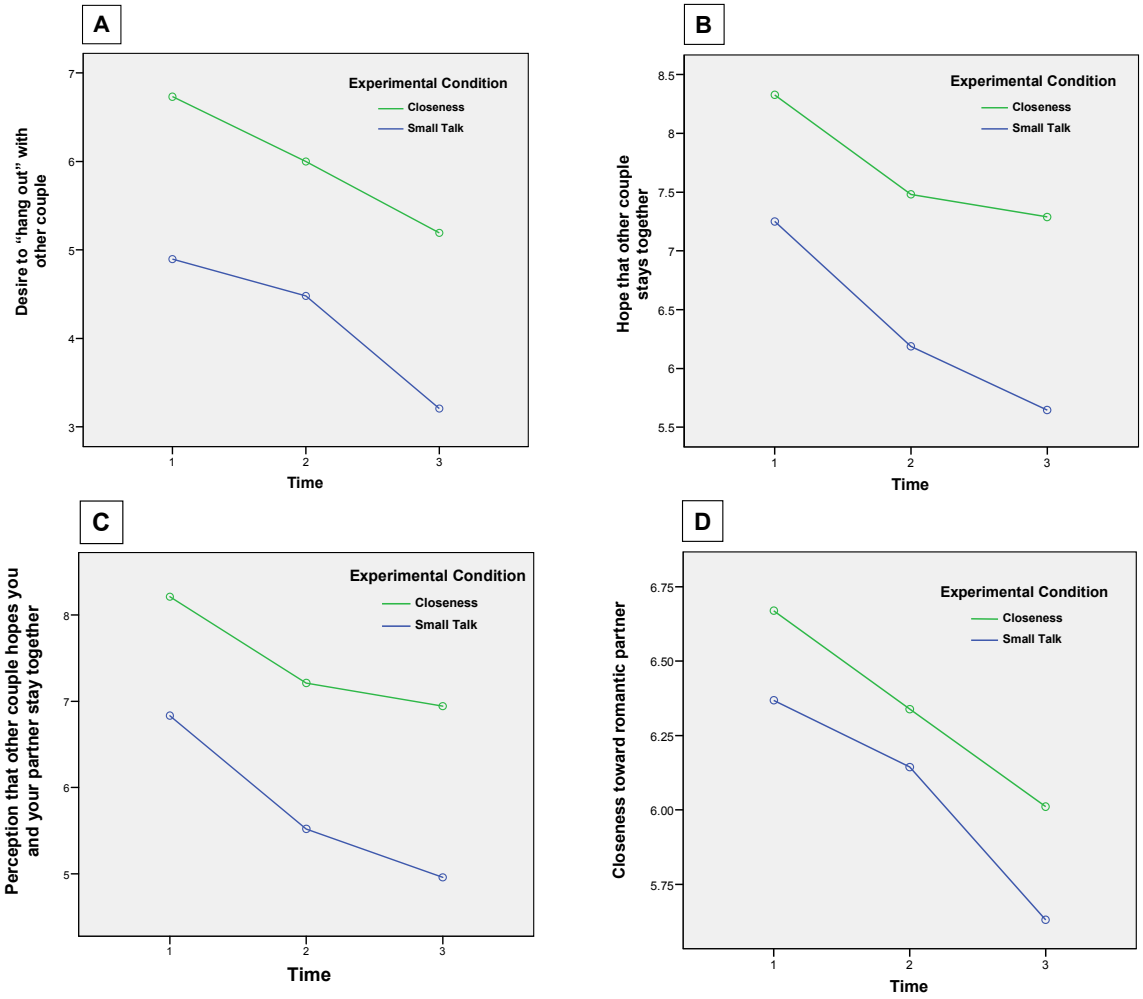
Note. The mean for the IOS with romantic partner measure is adjusted to control for baseline SIS scores.

would stay together in the future compared to those in the small talk condition. Additionally, there was a marginally significant effect of those in the closeness condition to feel closer to their romantic partners in the month after the study compared to those in the small talk condition. There were some gender differences. In both the closeness and small talk conditions, women were more hopeful that the other couple would stay together in the future (closeness $M = 7.71$ and $SD = 1.41$; small talk $M = 6.18$ and $SD = 2.06$) than the men were (closeness $M = 6.84$ and $SD = 1.70$, $t(51) = 2.05$, $p < .05$, $d = .57$; small talk $M = 4.95$ and $SD = 2.17$, $t(48) = 2.04$, $p < .05$, $d = .59$.

Changes Over Time Across Measures

To determine the overall effects of time and any possible time X condition interactions for the items measured at all three time points, repeated measures ANOVAs were conducted. As shown in Figure 1, there were significant drops over time for all

Figure 1. Changes over time, by condition, for: Desire to "hang out" with other couple (Panel A); Hope that the other couple stays together (Panel B); Perception that the other couple hopes you and your partner stay together (Panel C); and Closeness toward romantic partner (Panel D).



items across both conditions. Couples dropped in their desire to hang out with the other couple (Panel A; $F(2, 196) = 51.59$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_p = .35$), their hope that the other couple stays together in the future (Panel B; $F(2, 196) = 44.55$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_p = .31$), their perception that the other couple hopes they stay together (Panel C; $F(2, 196) = 51.40$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_p = .34$), and how close they felt to their own romantic partner (Panel D; $F(2, 196) = 20.08$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_p = .17$). However, there were no time X condition interactions. In

other words, although time had a negative effect on all of the outcomes measured at all three time points, these effects were not contingent upon whether a couple was in the closeness condition or in the small talk condition.

Time III – Couples' Contact with the Other Couples

In addition to containing the items that were identical to those assessed at Time II, the Time III follow-up questionnaire inquired whether couples had been in contact with the other couple they met in the study, and, if so, whether they had actually gotten together with them. In the closeness condition, 10 out of the 30 couples had made some contact with the couple they had met in the study—either by phone, email or in person. In contrast, none of the couples in the small talk condition had initiated contact with the couples they had met. A chi-square analysis showed that couples in the closeness condition were significantly more likely than those in the small talk condition to contact the other couple ($X^2(1) = 12.00$, $p < .001$, $\Phi = .45$). Further, among those who had made contact with the other couples, 4 had reported getting together on two separate occasions and 2 had reported getting together on three separate occasions. A chi-square analysis showed that couples in the closeness condition were significantly more likely than those in the small talk condition to get together with the other couple ($X^2(1) = 6.67$, $p < .01$, $\Phi = .33$). Thus, couples in the closeness condition not only were more likely than those in the small talk condition to have lasting feelings of closeness toward the couples they had met, but more likely to contact them afterwards and to meet them in person—precursors to real friendship. This occurred organically and without any facilitation from the experimenter outside of the experimental manipulation itself.

Are Couples Who Contact Each Other Happier in Their Own Relationships?

Previous studies have shown that couples who have a larger percentage of shared friends are more likely to be happy and satisfied in their romantic relationships compared to those who have a smaller percentage of shared friends (Ackerman, 1963; Agnew et al., 2001; Milardo, 1988). The direction of these effects has been unknown, in part because no longitudinal studies have been conducted to explore how friendships between couples form. Although voluntary contact with another couple does not constitute a true shared friendship per se, it does suggest proactive steps toward friendship. With the couples in the closeness condition in this study, we can see whether couples who contacted the other couples were happier in their own relationships at baseline compared to couples who made no attempt at contacting the other couples. This would provide indirect evidence that couples who are happier in their relationships are more likely to seek out friendships with other couples than couples who are less happy in their own relationships. However, the data from this study do not bear this out. The results from t-tests showed that, compared to couples who did not make contact with the other couples, couples who contacted the other couples were no more in love with their partners (contact $M = 4.99$ and $SD = .54$; no contact $M = 5.02$ and $SD = .66$, $t(58) = .14$, $p = .89$, $d = .04$), no closer to their partners (contact $M = 6.68$ and $SD = .37$; no contact $M = 6.48$ and $SD = .56$, $t(58) = 1.34$, $p = .17$, $d = .35$) and no more satisfied with their partners (contact $M = 4.54$ and $SD = .34$; no contact $M = 4.40$ and $SD = .62$, $t(58) = .99$, $p = .33$, $d = .26$). This provides preliminary evidence that the formation of friendships between couples may not be driven by pre-existing relationship quality. However, this finding is strongly qualified by

the small sample size of the group and the loose definition of friendship (contact with other couples) used here.

Time III Results Summary

In the month after initially interacting with the other couple in the lab, couples in the closeness condition talked more about the interaction, were more inclined to want to hang out with the other couples, to root for them to succeed, and to think that the other couples were rooting for them to succeed compared to couples in the small talk condition. In addition, couples in the closeness condition were marginally more likely than those in the small talk condition to feel closer to their romantic partners in the month following the interaction. Repeated-measures ANOVAs showed an overall drop across all measures over time. Couples in the closeness condition were significantly more likely than those in the small talk condition to make contact with the couples they had met in the lab and also to meet up with them in person. Those in the closeness condition who contacted the other couples were no happier in their relationships than those who made no attempt at contact.

RESEARCH QUESTION 3: WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MECHANISMS THROUGH WHICH THE DEVELOPMENT OF CLOSENESS BETWEEN COUPLES OCCURS?

As reported above, there were significant differences across condition for the primary outcome variables of interest and for the primary process variables of interest. Further, inspection of intercorrelations among all the variables showed a number of strong relationships between proposed process variables (e.g, self-disclosure, responsiveness and positive affect) and the outcome variables of interest (e.g., closeness between couples and closeness within couples); the intercorrelations for Time I, Time II

and Time III may be found in Appendices I, J and K, respectively. Thus, mediation analyses could be conducted to investigate possible mechanisms through which the experimental condition exerted its effects on the outcome variables.

In this section, the basic analytic strategy for mediation analyses involving pairs of couples first is described; second, possible mediating paths between experimental condition and closeness with the other couple are investigated; third, possible mediating paths between experimental condition and contact with the other couple are investigated; and finally, possible mediating paths between experimental condition and closeness with romantic partner are investigated.

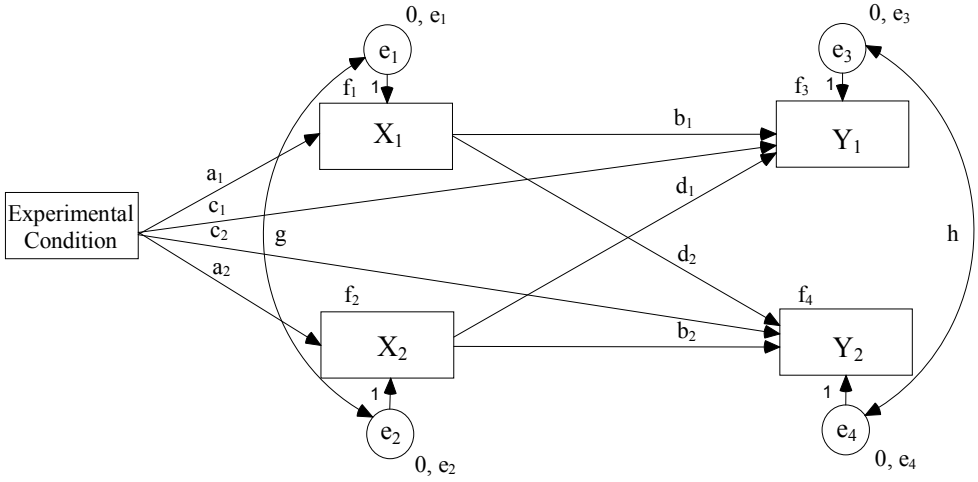
Overview of Data Analytic Strategy – The Actor-Partner Interdependence Model (APIM)

A unique characteristic of dyadic data is that the data from two couple members are not independent. For example, people who are satisfied in their romantic relationship tend to have romantic partners who also are satisfied; people who are optimistic tend to have optimistic romantic partners, and so on. In order to account for this interdependence in statistical analyses, relationship researchers in recent years have begun to frame their analyses in the Actor-Partner Interdependence Model (APIM; Kashy & Kenny, 2000; Kenny, 1996).

The APIM is a technique designed to address interdependence in dyadic analysis. This technique allows researchers to estimate, for example, the influence of one person's behavior (e.g., levels of self-disclosure) on her own feelings of closeness toward her romantic partner—called *actor* effects—as well as the effects of her behavior on her

partner's feelings of closeness toward her—called *partner* effects. Furthermore, the APIM is based on multiple regression and thus can be used for estimating simple effects and regression coefficients and for testing for mediation and moderation. For example, APIM can used to estimate whether the effects of experimental condition on relationship closeness are mediated by a person's own levels of disclosure (actor effect), as well as by his or her partner's levels of disclosure (partner effect). This basic APIM design is illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2. The Actor-Partner Interdependence Model (APIM). The parameters of this model include direct paths (a_1 and a_2) from the predictor (experimental condition) to the mediators (X_1 and X_2), direct paths (c_1 and c_2) from the predictor to the outcome variables (Y_1 and Y_2), direct actor effects (b_1 and b_2), direct partner effects (d_1 and d_2), mediator intercepts (f_1 and f_2), mediator residual variances (e_1 and e_2), outcome intercepts (f_3 and f_4), outcome residual variances (e_3 and e_4), and mediator residual (g) and outcome residual (h) covariances.

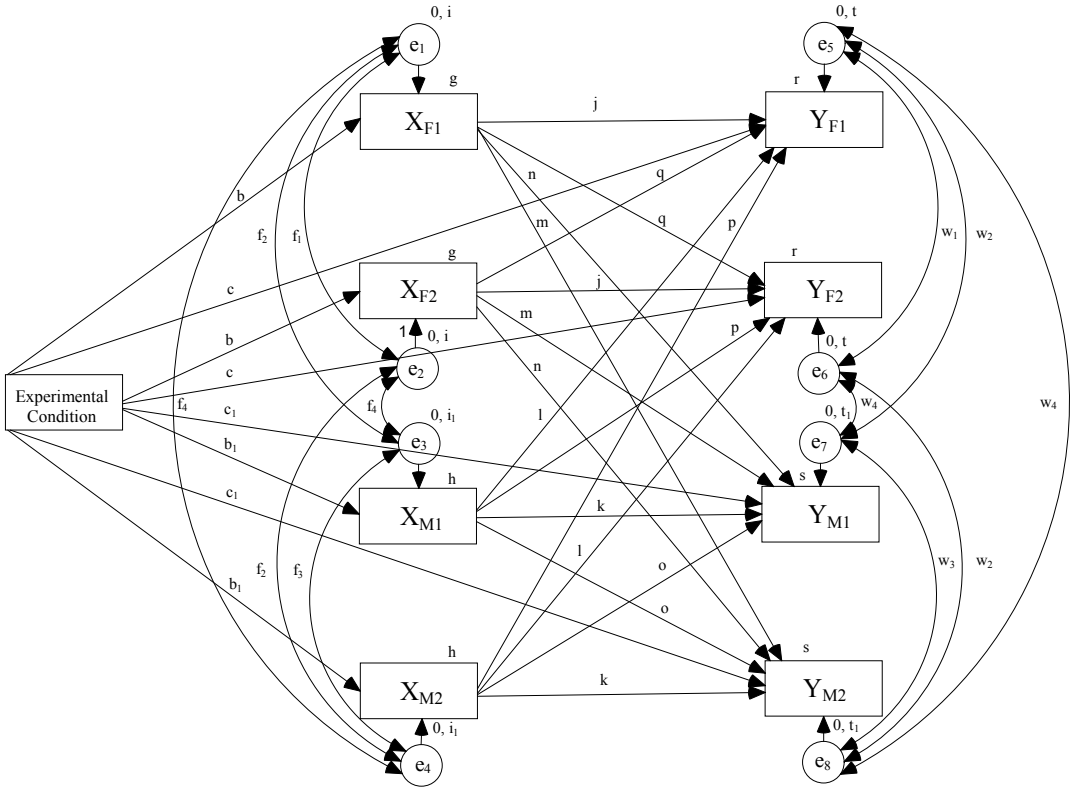


APIM can be used with either distinguishable dyads, such as heterosexual couples in which partners are distinguishable by gender, or with indistinguishable dyads, such as gay couples, in which partners are statistically interchangeable (Olsen & Kenny, 2006). With both distinguishable and indistinguishable data, parameter estimation can conveniently be accomplished using structural equation modeling (SEM). In this

dissertation, the analyses are more complex because there are two couples interacting with each other rather than simply two individuals interacting. In this case, the people within each couple are distinguishable by gender, but the two couples within the group are indistinguishable from each other. In other words, although there may be reason to speculate that the effects of the men are distinguishable from the effects of the women, there is no reason to expect that the effect of a man in one couple is distinguishable from the effect of the man in the other couple. The model constructed for this special case of the APIM may be found in Figure 3.

In this mediation model, the experimental condition (small talk or closeness, dummy coded as 0 and 1, respectively) that each pair of couples is in directly effects each person's behavior, X (e.g., levels of self-disclosure in the interaction), as well as directly affecting each person's outcome variable, Y (e.g., feelings of closeness toward the other couple). There also are indirect affects from experimental condition that are mediated through X to affect Y. In this model, each person's behavior affects his own outcome (actor effect) as well as the outcome of his conversational partners (partner effects), including the outcome of his romantic partner as well as the outcomes of each member of the other couple. This model can allow one to investigate, for example, the extent to which experimental condition drives each person's levels of disclosure, and how each person's levels of disclosure in turn drive his own levels of closeness as well as driving everyone else's levels of closeness.

Figure 3. APIM mediation model to estimate the effects of experimental condition on outcome variables with pairs of couples. F1 = female in couple 1; F2 = female in couple 2; M1 = male in couple 1; M2 = Male in couple 2. The parameters of this model include direct paths (b and b_1) from the predictor (experimental condition) to the mediators (X_{F1}, X_{F2}, X_{M1} and X_{M2}), direct paths (c and c_1) from the predictor to the outcome variables (Y_{F1}, Y_{F2}, Y_{M1} and Y_{M2}), direct actor effects (j and k), direct partner effects (l, m, n, o, p, q), mediator intercepts (g and h), mediator residual variances (i and i_1), outcome intercepts (r and s), outcome residual variances (t and t_1), and mediator residual (f_1, f_2, f_3 and f_4) and outcome residual (w_1, w_2, w_3 and w_4) covariances.



The APIM mediation analyses presented below follow the four steps of mediation recommended by Baron and Kenny (1986). Following this approach, mediation is inferred when: (1) the independent variable significantly affects the mediator; (2) the independent variable significantly affects the dependent variable in the absence of the mediator; (3) the mediator has a significant unique effect on the dependent variable; and (4) the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable shrinks or is reduced to zero upon the addition of the mediator to the model. A direct path from the

independent variable to the mediator that is not statistically different from zero would support full mediation.

Formal tests of mediated paths (Baron and Kenny's step 3 above) followed the recommendations of Shrout and Bolger (2002). Specifically, a bootstrap method in SEM was used to obtain 95% confidence intervals and significance tests of mediated paths. This method is slightly more accurate than the conventional Sobel test and is recommended when conducting mediation analyses with small to moderate sample sizes. The logic behind the bootstrap test is that the estimates of an indirect path are not normally distributed when that path is not equal to zero. Thus, a symmetric confidence interval (such as that used in the Sobel test) is not appropriate and could lead to a higher Type II error rate, especially with small sample sizes. The bootstrap method takes into account the positive skew of the indirect path estimate and therefore provides a non-symmetric and more accurate 95% confidence interval and significance test.

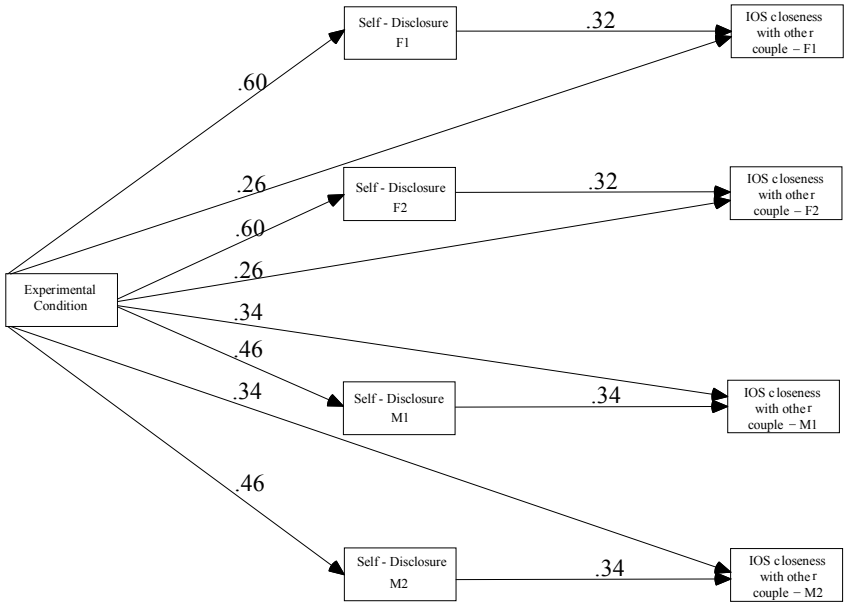
I describe each of these mediation analyses in turn below.

Mediation of the Effects of Experimental Condition on Time I Feelings of Closeness Toward the Other Couple

Self-disclosure. As shown in Figure 4, self-disclosure significantly mediated the association between experimental condition and closeness with the other couple[1]. There were no significant partner effects, only actor effects.

[1] The criterion for self-disclosure used here is self-reported self-disclosure. One also could have observers (e.g., the members of the other couple or one's romantic partner) rate a person's levels of self-disclosure. Observer ratings of self-disclosure were collected from the other couple members and from romantic partners in this study but are not reported for reasons of parsimony. Correlations between self-reports of disclosure and observer reports of disclosure ranged from .3 to .6. Self-reported disclosure was chosen as

Figure 4. APIM mediation model of the effects of experimental condition on closeness with the other couple by self-disclosure. F1 = female in couple 1; F2 = female in couple 2; M1 = male in couple 1; M2 = Male in couple 2. Intercepts, residual variances and residual covariances not shown. Non-significant paths trimmed from the model. All path coefficients are significant at $p < .05$. Overall model fit was good (CFI = .91, RMSEA = .10).



The bootstrap tests indicated that the mediated paths were significant: mediated path for women (standardized indirect effect) = .19, $p < .001$, 95% CI = (.08, .38); mediated path for men (standardized indirect effect) = .17, $p < .001$, 95% CI = (.07, .28). The analyses also suggested that the mediation was full for women and partial for men. After controlling for the mediated paths, the standardized direct path from experimental condition to closeness with the other couple dropped from .45 to .26 and was marginally significant for women ($p = .09$), and dropped from .48 to .34 for men, remaining significant. Constraining the direct path to be equal to zero for women did not significantly worsen the fit of the model (ΔX^2 (1, $N = 60$) = 2.8, $p = .09$); constraining the direct path to be equal to zero for men did (ΔX^2 (1, $N = 60$) = 6.5, $p < .01$). This

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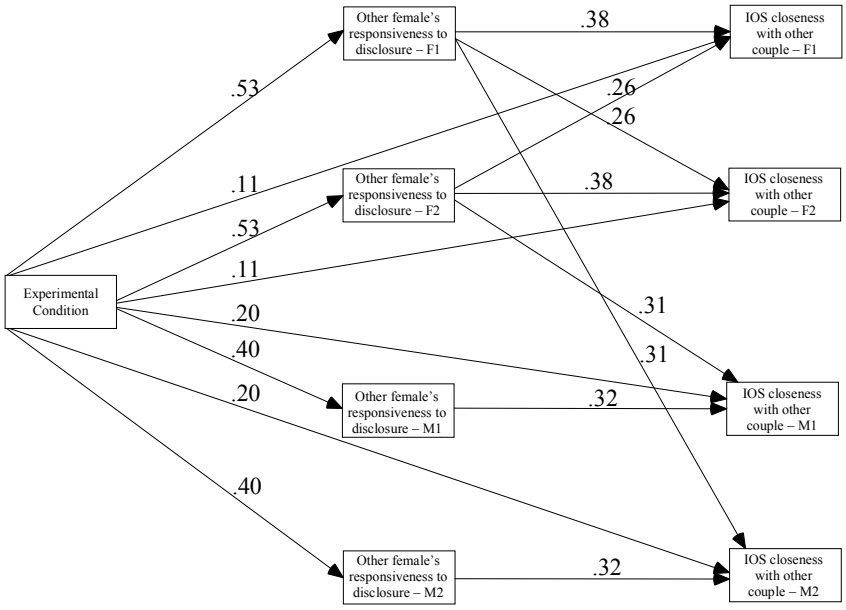
the criterion because it is the one most often used in the self-disclosure literature (Collins & Miller, 1994), allowing for direct comparison with previous findings.

indicated that the extent to which people felt close to the other couple was partially driven by how much they disclosed to the other couple but not by how much the other couple or their own romantic partner disclosed to them.

Responsiveness of female in other couple. As shown in Figure 5, responsiveness to disclosure from the female in the other couple significantly mediated the association between experimental condition and closeness with the other couple. There were significant actor effects for both men and women, significant partner effects from the woman in one couple to the woman in the other couple, and from the woman in one couple to the man in the other couple.

Figure 5. APIM mediation model of the effects of experimental condition on closeness with the other couple by the female in the other couple's responsiveness to the actor's disclosure. F1 = female in couple 1; F2 = female in couple 2; M1 = male in couple 1; M2 = Male in couple 2. Intercepts, residual variances and residual covariances not shown. Non-significant paths trimmed from the model. All path coefficients are significant at $p < .05$. Overall model fit was very good (CFI = .96, RMSEA = .07).

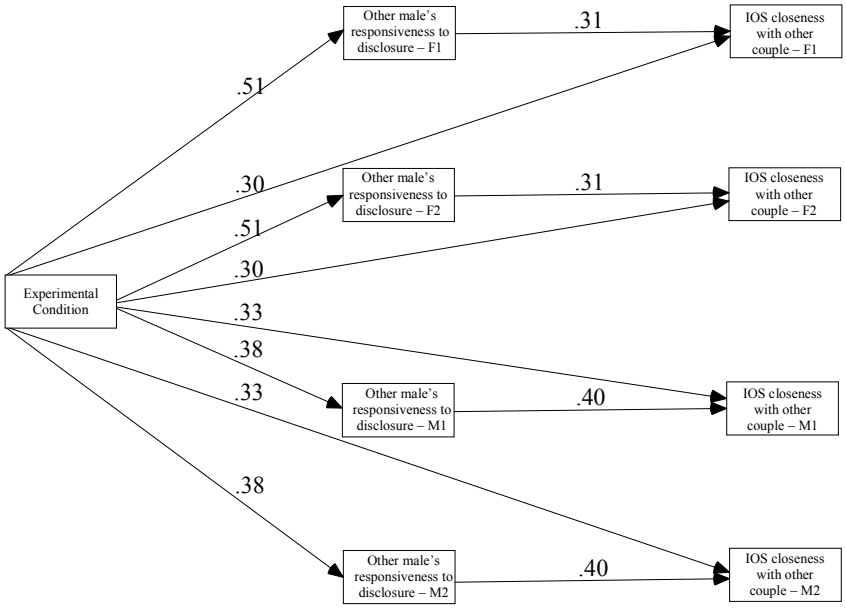


The bootstrap tests indicated that the mediated paths were significant: mediated paths for women (standardized indirect effect) = .34, $p < .001$, 95% CI = (.12, .55); mediated paths for men (standardized indirect effect) = .29, $p < .001$, 95% CI = (.13, .47). The analyses also suggested that the mediation was full for both women and men. After controlling for the mediated paths, the standardized direct path from experimental condition to closeness with the other couple dropped from .45 to .11 and was no longer significant for women ($p = .49$), and dropped from .48 to .20 and was no longer significant for the men ($p = .13$). Constraining the direct path to be equal to zero for women did not significantly worsen the fit of the model (ΔX^2 (1, $N = 60$) = .5, $p = .48$); constraining the direct path to be equal to zero for men also did not significantly worsen the fit of the model (ΔX^2 (1, $N = 60$) = 2.28, $p = .13$). This indicates that the extent to which both men and women felt close to the other couple was partially driven by how much they felt as though the woman in the other couple responded to their own disclosure. For women, closeness to the other couple was driven also by how responsive they themselves were to the other women's disclosure; for men, their closeness to other couple was partially driven by how responsive their own partners were to the disclosure of the women in the other couple.

Responsiveness of male in other couple. As shown in Figure 6, responsiveness to disclosure from the male in the other couple significantly mediated the association between experimental condition and closeness with the other couple. There were significant actor effects for both men and women but no partner effects.

The bootstrap tests indicated that the mediated paths were significant: mediated path for women (standardized indirect effect) = .16, $p < .01$, 95% CI = (.04, .32); mediated paths for men (standardized indirect effect) = .16, $p < .001$, 95% CI = (.07, .31). The analyses also suggested that the mediation was only partial for both women and men. After controlling for the mediated paths, the standardized direct path from experimental

Figure 6. APIM mediation model of the effects of experimental condition on closeness with the other couple by the male in the other couple's responsiveness to the actor's disclosure. F1 = female in couple 1; F2 = female in couple 2; M1 = male in couple 1; M2 = Male in couple 2. Intercepts, residual variances and residual covariances not shown. Non-significant paths trimmed from the model. All path coefficients are significant at $p < .05$. Overall model fit was very good (CFI = .96, RMSEA = .07).



condition to closeness with the other couple dropped from .45 to .30 and was still significant for women ($p = .04$), and dropped from .48 to .33 and was still significant for men ($p = .004$). Constraining the direct path to be equal to zero for women significantly worsened the fit of the model (ΔX^2 (1, $N = 60$) = 4.05, $p = .04$); constraining the direct path to be equal to zero for men also significantly worsened the fit of the model (ΔX^2 (1,

$N = 60) = 7.55$, $p = .006$). This indicates that the extent to which people felt close to the other couple was partially driven by how much they felt as though the male in the other couple responded to their own disclosure.

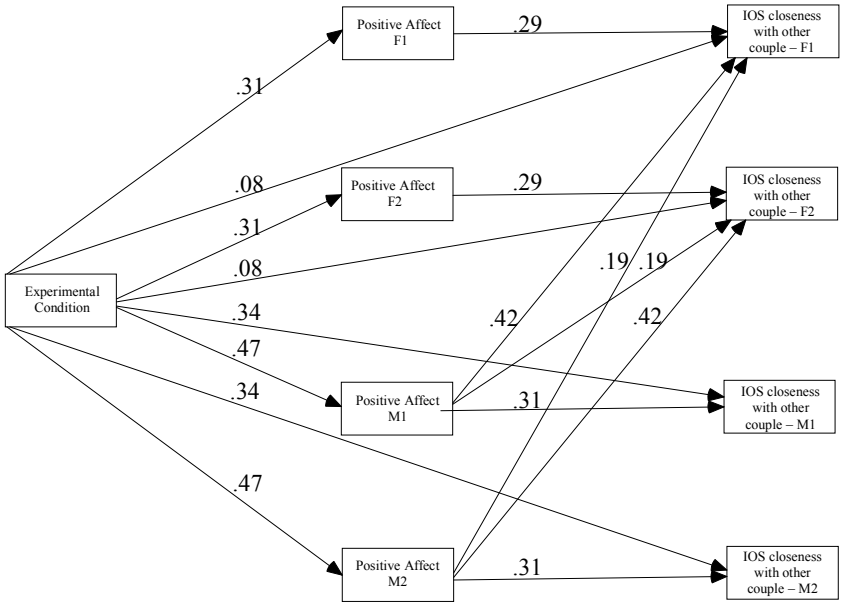
Responsiveness of romantic partner. Although responsiveness to disclosure from the male and the female in the other couple were predictive of feelings of closeness toward that couple, responsiveness from one's own romantic partner was not—there were no significant actor or partner affects for this variable.

Positive affect. As shown in Figure 7, positive affect significantly mediated the association between experimental condition and closeness with the other couple. There were significant actor effects for both men and women, significant partner effects from the man in one couple to the woman in the other couple, and from the man in one couple to his own romantic partner.

The bootstrap tests indicated that the mediated paths were significant: mediated paths for women (standardized indirect effect) = .38, $p < .001$, 95% CI = (.22, .56); mediated paths for men (standardized indirect effect) = .14, $p < .003$, 95% CI = (.05, .31). The analyses also suggested that the mediation was full for women but only partial for men. After controlling for the mediated paths, the standardized direct path from experimental condition to closeness with the other couple dropped from .45 to .08 and was no longer significant for women ($p = .59$), and dropped from .48 to .34 but was still significant for men ($p = .01$). Constraining the direct path to be equal to zero for women did not significantly worsen the fit of the model (ΔX^2 (1, $N = 60$) = .30, $p = .60$); but

constraining the direct path to be equal to zero for men did (ΔX^2 (1, N = 60) = 5.80, p = .02). This indicates that how close people felt to the other couple was partially driven by their own positive affect; for women, closeness to the other couple was also driven by their romantic partner's positive affect and by the male in the other couple's positive affect.

Figure 7. APIM mediation model of the effects of experimental condition on closeness with the other couple by positive affect. F1 = female in couple 1; F2 = female in couple 2; M1 = male in couple 1; M2 = Male in couple 2. Intercepts, residual variances and residual covariances not shown. Non-significant paths trimmed from the model. All path coefficients are significant at $p < .05$. Overall model fit was acceptable (CFI = .90, RMSEA = .12).



Novelty. There were no significant actor or partner effects for how novel the interaction was. Although those in the closeness condition reported that their experience was more novel than those in the small talk condition, varying levels of perceived novelty did not mediate the effects of the manipulation of feelings of closeness toward the other couple.

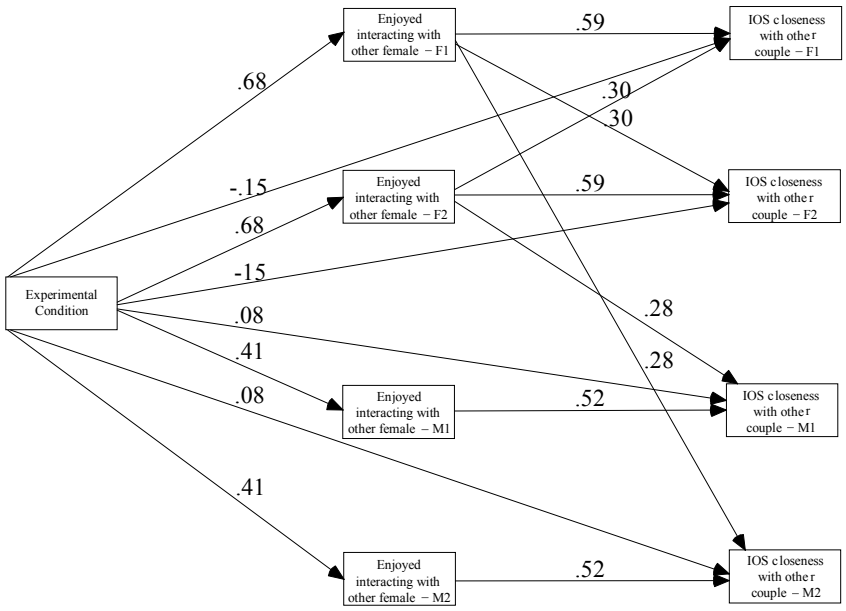
Enjoyment of interaction with female in other couple. The analyses reported above shed light on processes that may at least partially explain the effects of the experimental manipulation of closeness between couples. However, also of theoretical interest is the broader question of how a person in one couple's general perceptions of each individual in the couple (e.g., enjoyment of interacting with that person) drives overall perceptions of the other couple (e.g., feelings of closeness toward that couple). For example, if a women says that she felt close to another couple after meeting that couple, is it because she really liked interacting with the female in the other couple, the male in the other couple, or both? The following analyses tested this question.

As shown in Figure 8, enjoyment of interacting with the female in the other couple significantly mediated the association between experimental condition and closeness with the other couple. There were significant actor effects for both men and women, significant partner effects from the woman in one couple to the woman in the other couple, and from the woman in one couple to the man in the other couple.

The bootstrap tests indicated that the mediated paths were significant: mediated paths for women (standardized indirect effect) = .60, $p < .001$, 95% CI = (.27, 1.09); mediated paths for men (standardized indirect effect) = .40, $p < .001$, 95% CI = (.19, .67). The analyses also suggested that the mediation was full for both women and men. After controlling for the mediated paths, the standardized direct path from experimental condition to closeness with the other couple dropped from .45 to -.15 and was no longer significant for women ($p = .36$), and dropped from .48 to .08 and was no longer significant for men ($p = .49$). Constraining the direct path to be equal to zero for women

did not significantly worsen the fit of the model (ΔX^2 (1, N = 60) = .87, p = .35); nor did it for men (ΔX^2 (1, N = 60) = .52, p = .47). This suggests that how close people felt to the other couple was partially driven by their own liking of the other woman; for women, closeness to the other couple was also driven by the other woman's liking of her; and, for men, by how much the woman in the other couple enjoyed interacting with his own romantic partner.

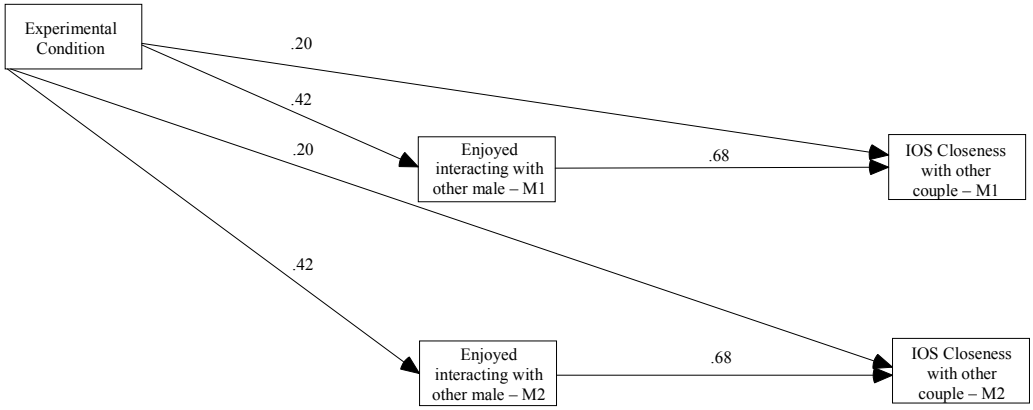
Figure 8. APIM mediation model of the effects of experimental condition on closeness with the other couple by enjoyment of interacting with the female in the other couple. F1 = female in couple 1; F2 = female in couple 2; M1 = male in couple 1; M2 = Male in couple 2. Intercepts, residual variances and residual covariances not shown. Non-significant paths trimmed from the model. All path coefficients are significant at $p < .05$. Overall model fit was acceptable (CFI = .87, RMSEA = .17).



Enjoyment of interaction with male in other couple. As shown in Figure 9, enjoyment of interacting with the male in the other couple significantly mediated the association between experimental condition and closeness with the other couple for men, but not for women. There were significant actor effects but no partner effects.

The bootstrap test indicated that the mediated path was significant: mediated path (standardized indirect effect) = .28, $p < .002$, 95% CI = (.14, .44). This analysis also suggested that the mediation was partial rather than full. After controlling for the mediated paths, the standardized direct path from experimental condition to closeness with the other couple dropped from .45 to .20 but was still significant ($p = .04$). Further, constraining the direct path to be equal to zero significantly worsened the fit of the model (ΔX^2 (1, $N = 60$) = 4.11, $p = .04$). This and the previous analysis suggests that the extent to which both men and women felt close to the other couple was driven more by how much people enjoyed interacting with the women than by how much people enjoyed interacting with the men.

Figure 9. APIM mediation model of the effects of experimental condition on closeness with the other couple by enjoyment of interacting with the male in the other couple. M1 = male in couple 1; M2 = Male in couple 2. Intercepts, residual variances and residual covariances not shown. Non-significant paths trimmed from the model. All path coefficients are significant at $p < .05$. Overall model fit was excellent (CFI = 1.00, RMSEA = .00).

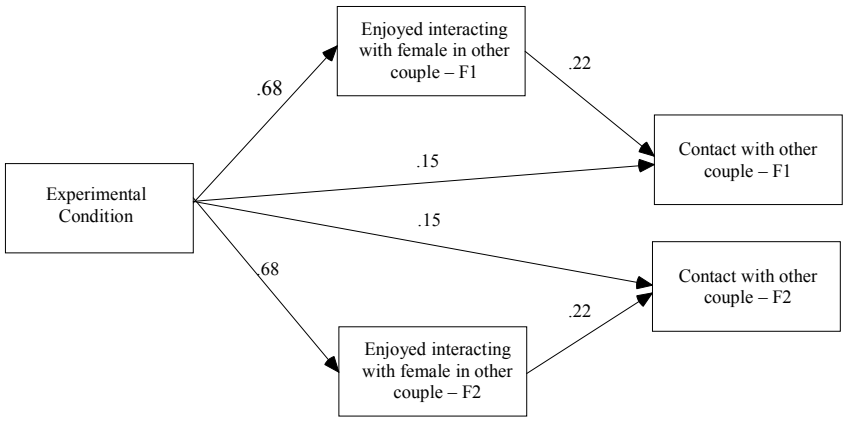


Mediation of the Effects of Experimental Condition on Contact with the Other Couple

Because of the relatively large portion of couples in the closeness condition—one third—who actually contacted the couples they interacted with in the month after they

met them, exploratory analyses were conducted to investigate potential mediators of this effect. Because contact was measured at the couple-level, analyses also were conducted at the couple level. The same potential mediators as those examined above were examined here—self-disclosure, female responsiveness, male responsiveness, partner responsiveness, positive affect, novelty, enjoyment of interacting with the other female, and enjoyment of interacting with the other male. Of those, only enjoyment of interacting with the other female mediated the effects of the manipulation on contact with the other couples. As shown in Figure 10, enjoyment of interacting with the female in the other couple significantly mediated the association between experimental condition and contact with the other couple, and this effect was driven by how much the women—not the men—enjoyed interacting with the women in the other couple.

Figure 10. APIM mediation model of the effects of experimental condition on contact with the other couple in the month following the interaction by enjoyment of interacting with the female in the other couple. F1 = female in couple 1; F2 = female in couple 2. Intercepts, residual variances and residual covariances not shown. Non-significant paths trimmed from the model. All path coefficients are significant at $p < .05$. Overall model fit was excellent (CFI = 1.00, RMSEA = .00).



The bootstrap test indicated that the mediated path was significant: mediated path (standardized indirect effect) = .30, $p < .02$, 95% CI = (.05, .69). This analysis also

suggested that the mediation was full. After controlling for the mediated path, the standardized direct path from experimental condition to contact with the other couple dropped from .45 to .15, and was no longer significant (p = .26). Further, constraining the direct path to be equal to zero did not significantly worsen the fit of the model (ΔX^2 (1, N = 60) = .42, p = .52).

RESEARCH QUESTION 4: WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MECHANISMS THAT MEDIATE THE EFFECTS OF THE MANIPULATION ON CLOSENESS WITHIN COUPLES?

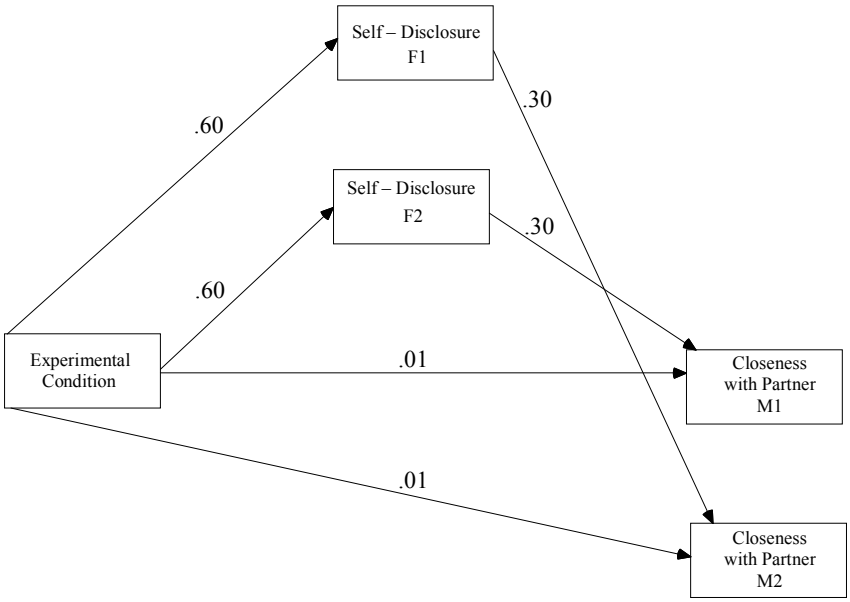
While the previous section focused on potential mediators underlying the effects of the experimental manipulation on between-couple outcomes, this final section addresses potential mediators underlying within-couple effects, specifically the effect of the experimental manipulation on closeness with romantic partners immediately following the manipulation. These analyses focus on self-disclosure, responsiveness to disclosure, positive affect, novelty, and learning new things about one's partner as potential mediators. Each of these analyses are described below in turn.

Self-disclosure. As shown in Figure 11, self-disclosure during the interaction with the other couple significantly mediated the association between experimental condition and closeness with romantic partners for men, but not for women. There were significant partner effects from the woman in one couple to the man in the other couple, but no actor effects.

The bootstrap test indicated that the mediated path was significant: mediated path (standardized indirect effect) = .18, p = .04, 95% CI = (.01, .39). This analysis also suggested that the mediation was full. After controlling for the mediated path, the

standardized direct path from experimental condition to closeness with romantic partner dropped from .18 to .01, and was no longer significant (p = .93). Further, constraining the direct path to be equal to zero did not significantly worsen the fit of the model (ΔX^2 (1, N = 60) = .01, p = .92). This suggests that the extent to which men increased in feelings of closeness to their romantic partners as a function of the manipulation was in part mediated by how disclosing the woman in the other couple was.

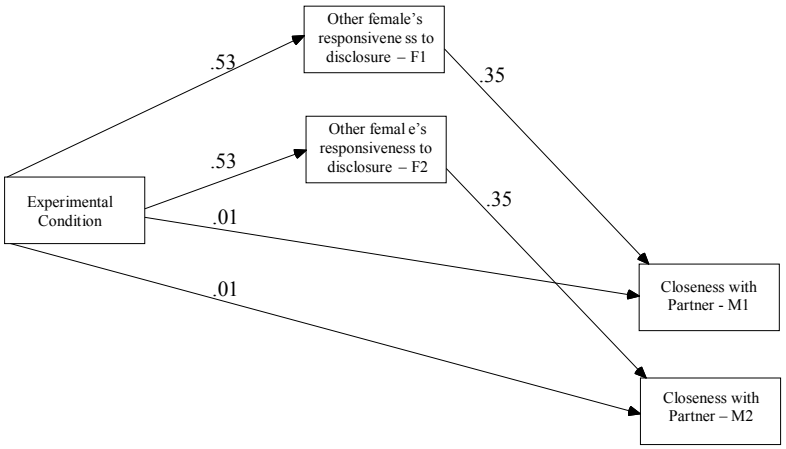
Figure 11. APIM mediation model of the effects of experimental condition on feelings of closeness with one's romantic partner by self-disclosure. F1 = female in couple 1; F2 = female in couple 2; M1 = male in couple 1; M2 = Male in couple 2. Intercepts, residual variances and residual covariances not shown. Non-significant paths trimmed from the model. All path coefficients are significant at $p < .05$. Overall model fit was excellent (CFI = 1.00, RMSEA = .00).



Responsiveness of female in other couple. As shown in Figure 12, responsiveness of the female in one couple to the disclosure of the female in the other couple during the interaction also significantly mediated the association between experimental condition and closeness with romantic partners for men, but not for women.

There were significant partner effects from the female in one couple to the male in that same couple, but no actor effects.

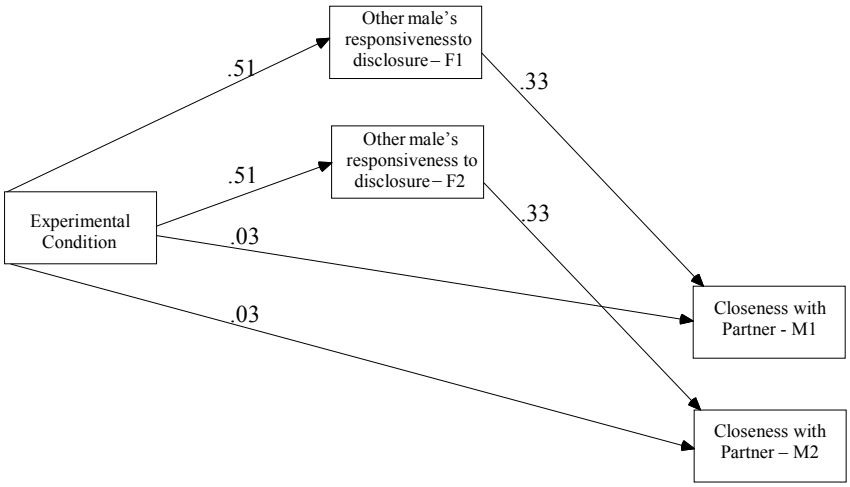
Figure 12. APIM mediation model of the effects of experimental condition on feelings of closeness with one's romantic partner by the female in the other couple's responsiveness to the actor's disclosure. F1 = female in couple 1; F2 = female in couple 2; M1 = male in couple 1; M2 = Male in couple 2. Intercepts, residual variances and residual covariances not shown. Non-significant paths trimmed from the model. All path coefficients are significant at $p < .05$. Overall model fit was good (CFI = .91, RMSEA = .09).



The bootstrap test indicated that the mediated path was significant: mediated path (standardized indirect effect) = .18, $p = .04$, 95% CI = (.02, .40). This analysis also suggested that the mediation was full. After controlling for the mediated path, the standardized direct path from experimental condition to closeness with romantic partner dropped from .18 to .01, and was no longer significant ($p = .93$). Further, constraining the direct path to be equal to zero did not significantly worsen the fit of the model (ΔX^2 (1, $N = 60$) = .01, $p = .92$). Thus, the more responsive that women were to the disclosure of the women in the other couple, the more likely the boyfriends of the women who were disclosing were to feel closer to their partners.

Responsiveness of male in other couple. Similarly, as shown in Figure 13, responsiveness of the male in one couple to disclosure of the female in the other couple significantly mediated the association between experimental condition and closeness with romantic partners for men, but not for women. There were significant partner effects from the woman in one couple to the man in that same couple, but no actor effects.

Figure 13. APIM mediation model of the effects of experimental condition on feelings of closeness with one's romantic partner by the male in the other couple's responsiveness to the actor's disclosure. F1 = female in couple 1; F2 = female in couple 2; M1 = male in couple 1; M2 = Male in couple 2. Intercepts, residual variances and residual covariances not shown. Non-significant paths trimmed from the model. All path coefficients are significant at $p < .05$. Overall model fit was good (CFI = .94, RMSEA = .08).

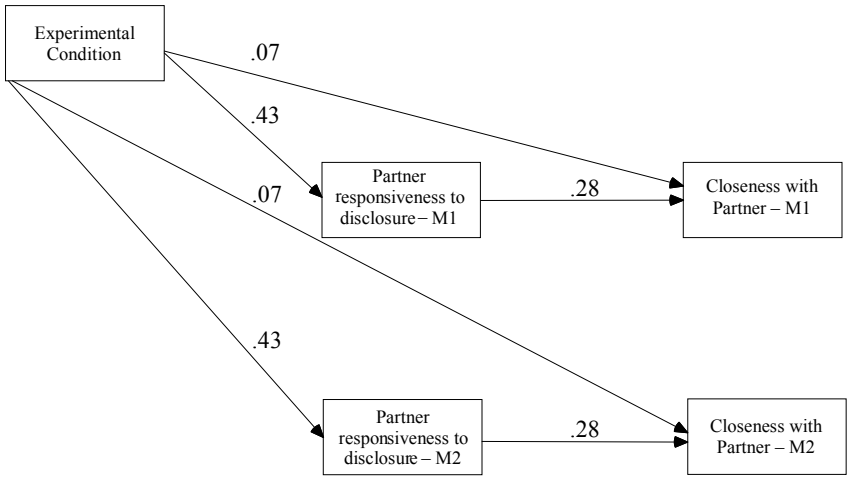


The bootstrap test indicated that the mediated path was significant: mediated path (standardized indirect effect) = .17, $p = .03$, 95% CI = (.02, .33). This analysis also suggested that the mediation was full. After controlling for the mediated path, the standardized direct path from experimental condition to closeness with romantic partner dropped from .18 to .03, and was no longer significant ($p = .87$). Further, constraining the direct path to be equal to zero did not significantly worsen the fit of the model (ΔX^2 (1, $N = 60$) = .02, $p = .89$). Thus, the more responsive that men were to the disclosure of the

women in the other couple, the more likely the boyfriends of the women who were disclosing were to feel closer to their partners.

Responsiveness of romantic partner. As shown in Figure 14, romantic partner responsiveness to disclosure significantly mediated the association between experimental condition and closeness with romantic partners for men, but not for women. There were significant actor effects but no partner effects.

Figure 14. APIM mediation model of the effects of experimental condition on feelings of closeness with one's romantic partner by romantic partner responsiveness to the actor's disclosure. F1 = female in couple 1; F2 = female in couple 2; M1 = male in couple 1; M2 = Male in couple 2. Intercepts, residual variances and residual covariances not shown. Non-significant paths trimmed from the model. All path coefficients are significant at $p < .05$. Overall model fit was excellent (CFI = 1.00, RMSEA = .00).

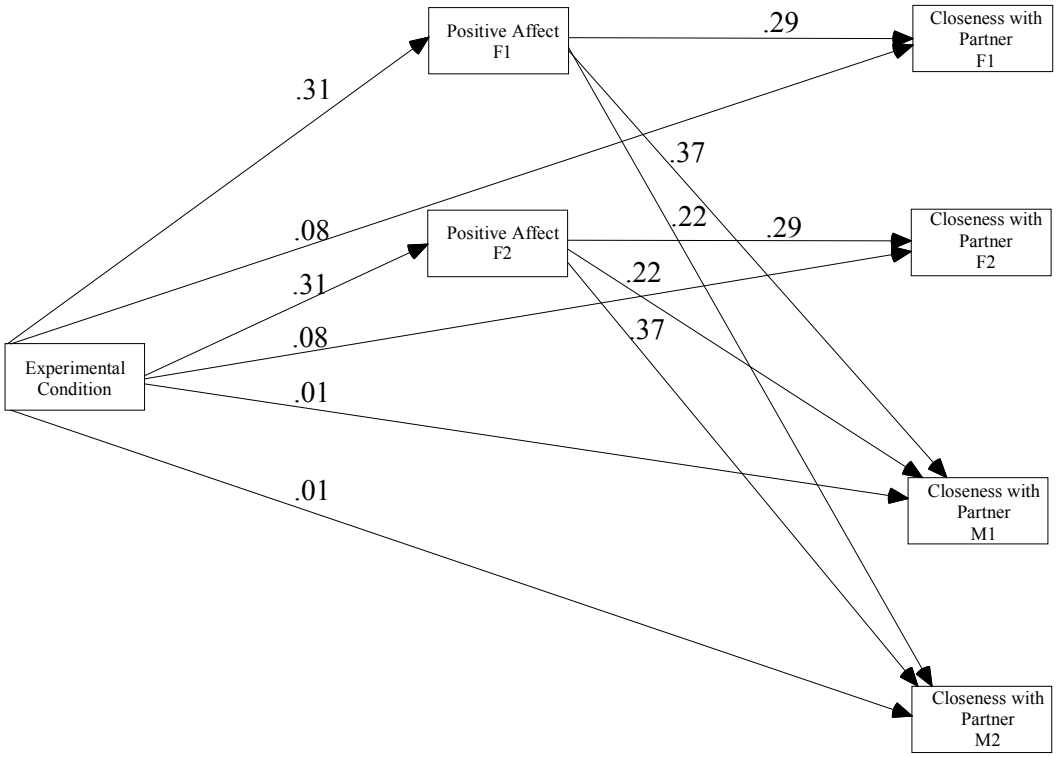


The bootstrap test indicated that the mediated path was significant: mediated path (standardized indirect effect) = .12, $p = .03$, 95% CI = (.01, .29). This analysis also suggested that the mediation was full. After controlling for the mediated path, the standardized direct path from experimental condition to closeness with romantic partner dropped from .18 to .03, and was no longer significant ($p = .63$). Further, constraining the direct path to be equal to zero did not significantly worsen the fit of the model (ΔX^2 (1, *N*

= 60) = .23, p = .63). Thus, the more responsive that women were to the disclosure of their boyfriends, the more likely their boyfriends were to feel closer to them.

Positive affect. As shown in Figure 15, positive affect significantly mediated the association between experimental condition and closeness with romantic partners. There were significant actor effects for women, significant partner effects from the woman in one couple to the man in the other couple, and from the woman in one couple to the man in the same couple.

Figure 15. APIM mediation model of the effects of experimental condition on feelings of closeness with one's romantic partner by positive affect. F1 = female in couple 1; F2 = female in couple 2; M1 = male in couple 1; M2 = Male in couple 2. Intercepts, residual variances and residual covariances not shown. Non-significant paths trimmed from the model. All path coefficients are significant at $p < .05$. Overall model fit was good (CFI = .91, RMSEA = .07).



The bootstrap tests indicated that the mediated paths were significant: mediated paths for women (standardized indirect effect) = .09, $p = .03$, 95% CI = (.01, .55); mediated paths for men (standardized indirect effect) = .19, $p = .02$, 95% CI = (.02, .43). The analyses also suggested that the mediation was full for both women and men. After controlling for the mediated paths, the standardized direct path from experimental condition to closeness with the other couple dropped from .18 to .08 and was no longer significant for women ($p = .54$), and dropped from .18 to .01 and was no longer significant for men ($p = .95$). Constraining the direct path to be equal to zero for women did not significantly worsen the fit of the model (ΔX^2 (1, $N = 60$) = .36, $p = .55$); constraining the direct path to be equal to zero for men also did not significantly worsen the fit of the model (ΔX^2 (1, $N = 60$) = .09, $p = .92$). This indicates that the extent to which people felt close to their romantic partners was, for women, partially driven by their own levels of positive affect, and, for men, by the levels of positive affect of both of their own partner and the woman in the other couple.

Novelty. There were no significant actor or partner effects for how novel the interaction was. Although those in the closeness condition reported that their experience was more novel than those in the small talk condition, varying levels of perceived novelty did not mediate the effects of the manipulation on feelings of closeness toward one's own romantic partner.

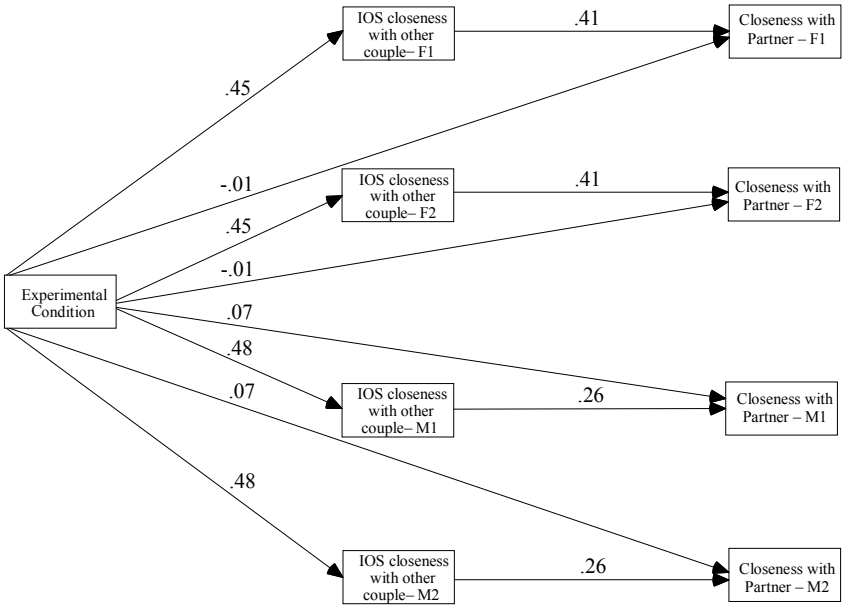
Learning new things about one's romantic partner. There also were no significant actor or partner effects for learning new things about one's romantic partner. This indicates that the effects of the experimental manipulation on feelings of closeness

toward one's partner cannot be explained by the fact that they may have simply been learning new things about their partner during the interaction.

What might explain the mediating effects of behaviors of members of the other couple on feelings of closeness toward one's own romantic partner? The mediation analyses described above suggest that, for men at least, how close people felt toward their own romantic partners after interacting with the other couple was in part a function not only of their partners' behaviors (e.g., levels of positive affect and responsiveness to disclosure), but also a function of the behaviors of the other couple (e.g., levels of disclosure of the woman in the other couple and how responsive both the woman and the man in the other couple were to their partners' disclosure). One possible explanation for this effect is that men felt closer to the other couple as a function of the other couple's behaviors, which in turn led men to feel closer to their own partners. This would be somewhat akin to actor effects in Kenny's Social Relations Model (SRM; Kenny & La Voie, 1984). These are not to be confused with actor effects in APIM. In SRM, actor effects are considered to be a person's tendency to rate others in the same way, so that their ratings of one person (in this case, ratings of closeness felt toward the other couple) covary with their ratings of other people (in this case, ratings of closeness felt toward their own romantic partners). To explore whether the effects of the experimental manipulation on feelings of closeness toward romantic partners were partially driven by how close they felt toward the other couple, an additional mediation analysis was conducted, the results of which are presented below.

As shown in Figure 16, feelings of closeness toward the other couple significantly mediated the association between experimental condition and closeness with one's own romantic partner. There were significant actor effects for both men and women but no partner effects.

Figure 16. APIM mediation model of the effects of experimental condition on feelings of closeness with one's romantic partner by feelings of closeness with the other couple. F1 = female in couple 1; F2 = female in couple 2; M1 = male in couple 1; M2 = Male in couple 2. Intercepts, residual variances and residual covariances not shown. Non-significant paths trimmed from the model. All path coefficients are significant at $p < .05$. Overall model fit was acceptable (CFI = .73, RMSEA = .16).



The bootstrap tests indicated that the mediated paths were significant: mediated path for women (standardized indirect effect) = .12, $p = .006$, 95% CI = (.06, .41); mediated path for men (standardized indirect effect) = .18, $p = .04$, 95% CI = (.01, .29). The analyses also suggested that the mediation was full for both women and men. After controlling for the mediated paths, the standardized direct path from experimental condition to closeness with romantic partner dropped from .18 to -.01 for women and was no longer significant, and dropped from .18 to .07 for men and was no longer significant.

Constraining the direct path to be equal to zero for women did not significantly worsen the fit of the model (ΔX^2 (1, N = 60) = .01, p = .92); constraining the direct path to be equal to zero for men also did not worsen the fit of the model (ΔX^2 (1, N = 60) = .28, p = .60).

Summary of Mediation Analyses

The results presented in this section point to potential process variables that may explain the effects of the closeness-induction procedure on closeness between couples (Research Question 3), contact with couples in the month following the manipulation, and closeness within couples (Research Question 4). These results suggested that closeness between couples was mediated by self-disclosure, responsiveness of the male and the female in the other couple, and positive affect; subsequent analyses suggested that closeness between couples was more a function of how much people enjoyed interacting with the female in the other couple than by how much they enjoyed interacting with the male in the other couple. The effect of the manipulation on contact with the other couple was mediated only by how much women enjoyed interacting with the women in the other couples.

The effect of the manipulation on closeness within couples was mediated by self-disclosure, responsiveness of the male and the female in the other couple, partner responsiveness, and positive affect; a subsequent analysis suggested that some of these effects may have been driven in part by how close couples felt to the other couples.

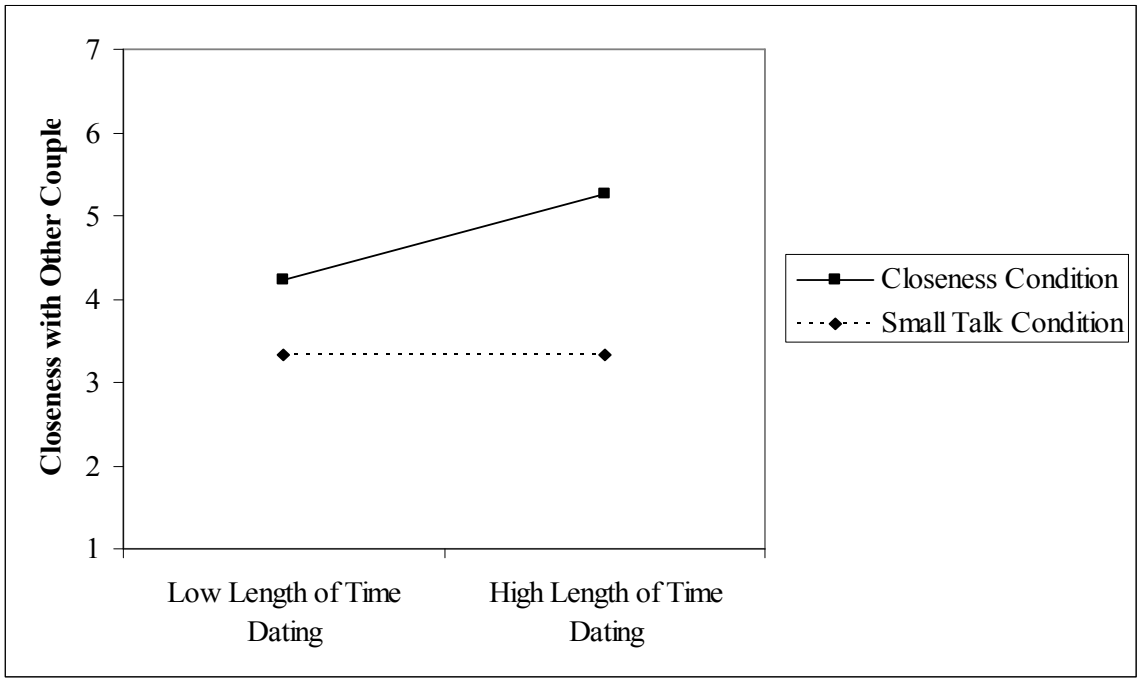
OTHER RELEVANT DATA

The focus of the analyses presented in this dissertation has been on main effects of the manipulation and on possible mechanisms underlying these effects. But what about moderators? Did the experimental manipulation work for some people but not for others? To address this question, separate analyses were conducted to see whether Big 5 personality traits, gender, or length of time dating moderated the effects of the manipulation on Time I closeness with the other couple and Time I closeness with one's romantic partner. In these analyses, hierarchical regression was used, with experimental condition (dummy coded 0 and 1 for small talk and closeness, respectively) entered with the moderator (e.g., Extraversion) and the product of experimental condition and the moderator. Neither sex nor any of the Big 5 traits moderated the effects of the manipulation. However, as shown in Figure 17, the effects of the manipulation on feelings of closeness with the other couple were moderated by length of time dating (interaction term $\beta = .25$, $p = .04$). Length of time dating was positively associated with feelings of closeness with the other couple for those in the closeness condition but not for those in the small talk condition.

Why might people who have been dating their partner for a long time feel closer to other couples than those in shorter-term relationships? One possible explanation is that the longer that two people are dating each other, the more comfortable they are being open and disclosing around their romantic partners. Because self-disclosure mediated the effects of the experimental manipulation on closeness with the other couple, this may have been a case of mediated moderation. In other words, length of time dating one's partner may have moderated the effects of experimental condition on closeness with the

other couple only for those who were more disclosing in their interaction with the other couple. Testing for mediated moderation can be accomplished using the steps of Baron and Kenny (1986) laid out earlier in the results section. In this case, using SEM was not necessary because there were only actor effects for the previously reported analysis of self-disclosure mediating the effects of experimental condition on closeness with the other couple.

Figure 17. Moderation of effects of experimental manipulation on feelings of closeness with the other couple by length of time dating.



To test whether the interaction of condition and time dating significantly affected self-disclosure, condition, time dating and condition X time dating were entered together as predictors in a hierarchical regression. The interaction term significantly predicted self-disclosure ($\beta = .26$, $p = .02$). Self-disclosure was than entered into a regression with condition, time dating and condition X time dating, with closeness with the other couple

as the dependent variable. Self-disclosure significantly predicted closeness with the other couple ($\beta = .36$, $p < .001$), however, the condition X time dating interaction term was no longer significant ($\beta = .16$, $p = .18$). A Sobel Z-test was used to test the indirect effect of self-disclosure and this test was significant ($z = 1.97$, $p < .05$). These results are consistent with mediated moderation—length of time moderated the effects of experimental condition only to the extent that it was associated with self-disclosure during the interaction with the other couple.

Chapter 4: Discussion

In a romantic relationship, one person's thoughts, feelings and behaviors are not independent from the other's. So, too, are the thoughts, feelings and behaviors of both people not independent from the social world in which a relationship is embedded. How do couples form friendships with others outside of their relationship, and what are the implications of those friendships?

The goal of this dissertation was to explore how friendships between couples—or at least precursors to friendship—are forged in a controlled laboratory setting. The method used was relatively simple and straightforward, lasting only 45 minutes. Couples took part in discussion activities involving increasing amounts of self-disclosure and other intimacy-building activities (closeness condition) or discussion activities involving minimal disclosure (small talk condition). This design explored whether it is possible to generate interpersonal closeness between couples and explored effects on closeness within couples. Following up with couples the next day and one month after the experiment provided an opportunity to examine the long-term effects of the manipulation on whether couples advanced further in the friendship-formation process (e.g., contacted the other couple or met up with them), and other long-term effects on perceptions of the other couple and feelings of closeness toward one's own romantic partner.

Overview of Findings

Between-Couple Effects

Compared to couples in the small talk condition, couples in the closeness condition felt much closer to the other couples, liked them more, were more committed to

the success of their relationship, and thought the other couple was more committed to the success of theirs. The average IOS (closeness) score for couples in the closeness condition was 4.75. In a sample of 296 students (Aron et al., 1992) who were roughly the same age of the couples in this study, participants used the IOS scale to rate their "closest, deepest, most involved, and most intimate relationship." In that sample, the mean IOS scale score was 4.65 (*SD* = 1.50) and approximately normally distributed. Using those data as a benchmark, the mean scores for couples in the closeness-condition in the current study were above the 50th percentile of ratings of people's closest, deepest, most involved, and most intimate relationships. After 45 minutes of interacting with each other, the relationship between these couples was rated as closer than the closest relationship in the lives of 50% of similar students. However, the possibility that participants used the scale differently in this context from how they would when assessing ongoing relationships cannot be ruled out.

At the 1-day and 1-month follow-up marks, couples in the closeness condition felt more positively about the couples they met in the study than did those in the small talk condition. Further, 10 out of the 30 couples in the closeness condition contacted the other couple they had met—6 actually met up with the other couple in person; none in the small talk condition contacted the couples they had met. Although other studies (e.g., Aron et al., 1997) using this experimental manipulation with individual strangers have reported anecdotal evidence of real friendships being formed, this is the first to systematically track people after the manipulation. Of course, this finding does not

address whether couples considered the other couples they had contacted to be "real" friends, only whether they had contacted them and met up with them.

Are couples who seek out friendships with other couples happier in their romantic relationships to begin with compared to those who do not? Preliminary findings presented here suggest perhaps not. Those in the closeness condition who contacted the other couples were no happier in their relationships than those who did not, with no significant differences in baseline measures of passionate love, closeness or relationship satisfaction. However, these results are based on a small sample, from which only large between-group effects might be detected.

Within-Couple Effects

Couples in the closeness condition also felt closer to their own partners immediately following the interaction and marginally closer to each other a month later, controlling for baseline closeness. This suggests the possibility of relationship-enhancing effects of interacting with other couples, particularly in the short term. Of course, it is not possible from this design to directly assess whether it was the presence of the other couple driving this effect. It may be that if a couple went through this closeness-building exercise alone together that they would enjoy similar benefits.

It is important to note that the experimental manipulation did not result in improvements in other types of relationship quality, specifically relationship satisfaction and passionate love. One explanation for this is that the manipulation used here is specifically geared toward creating closeness; it therefore is not particularly surprising that closeness was the aspect of relationship quality that was most affected. A second

explanation is that that relationship satisfaction and passionate love are more stable than relationship closeness. Further research incorporating all three types of measures is needed to clarify these issues.

Exploration of Possible Mediators

Mediation analyses pointed to several possible explanations for why couples felt close to each other after the experimental manipulation. The first is self-disclosure. For both men and women, higher levels of self-disclosure were linked to greater feelings of closeness toward the other couple. However, self-disclosure was not associated with how close the other couple felt to them. This is an important distinction because previous research has found that when two individuals interact, self-disclosure is related to how much the discloser likes the other person and how much the other person likes them (Collins & Miller, 1994).

How responsive one couple was to disclosure from members of the other couple also mediated the effects of the manipulation on between-couple closeness, in particular how responsive the women were. The more responsive people felt the woman in the other couple was, the closer they felt to that couple. For women, their own responsiveness also led to them feeling closer to the other couple. For men, how responsive their own partner was to the disclosure of the woman in the other couple partially explained their feelings of closeness toward the other couple. The responsiveness of the men also partially mediated the effects of the manipulation; however, these effects were not as strong as the effects of the women's responsiveness. Taken together, these findings suggest that both self-disclosure and partner responsiveness are important determinants of how close

couples feel to each other. This also suggests that the development of intimacy between couples is not so different from the development of intimacy within couples. Indeed, diary research has shown that daily fluctuations in intimacy within a couple are closely tied to both self-disclosure and partner responsiveness (Laurenceau et al., 1998; Laurenceau et al., 2004).

Positive affect also played a role in the generation of closeness between couples, in particular for women. The greater levels of positive affect reported by participants after the interaction, the closer they felt toward the other couple. For women, the greater levels of positive affect reported by both of the men (their own partner and the man in the other couple), the closer they felt to the other couple. This suggests that women may have been sensitive to how enthusiastic and energetic the men in the group were and that this partially drove how close the women felt to the other couple.

To what extent were feelings of closeness toward the other couple driven by how much people enjoyed interacting with each individual in the other couple? Mediation analyses showed that for women, how close they felt toward the other couple was completely a function of how much they enjoyed interacting with the woman in the other couple. For men, enjoyment of interacting with the man in the other couple was also a predictor of feelings of closeness toward that couple, but not as strong a predictor as enjoyment of interaction with the women when both actor and partner effects are taken into account. Why might this be this case? One possible explanation is that the women in these interactions simply were more engaging. A number of studies now have shown that, although men clearly value and strive for close relationships, women's self-construals are

much more relationally interdependent than men's (Acitelli & Young, 1996; Cross & Madson, 1997; Kiecolt-Glaser & Newton, 2001). Self-construals characterized by relational interdependence incorporate representations of close and significant others (e.g., one's romantic partner or close friends), so that self-attributes, characteristics and preferences are represented within the context of close relationships. Thus, women may be more motivated to be engaging in an interaction with another couple—a situation in which relational interdependence is highly salient.

This would help to explain why women also seemed to be the ones who determined whether contact was made with the other couples. Of the several process variables that were examined, only how much women enjoyed interacting with the other women mediated the effects of the experimental manipulation on contact with the other couple.

Possible mediators of the effects of the manipulation on closeness within couples also were examined. Some intriguing effects emerged. Namely, self-disclosure from the members of the other couple and responsiveness from the members of the other couple to woman's disclosure were associated with how close the men felt to their own partners, but there were no actor or partner disclosure effects mediating how close the women felt to their partners. In addition, the more men felt that their romantic partners were responsive to their disclosure, the closer they felt to them.

Positive affect mediated the effects of the manipulation on feelings of closeness to one's romantic partner for both men and women. The greater the positive affect reported by the women, the closer they felt to their partners. For the men, the greater the positive

affect reported by both of the women in the group—their own partner and the woman in the other couple—the closer they felt to their partner. Novelty of the interaction did not mediate the effects of the manipulation. Although some studies have suggested that novelty is an important component of self-expanding activities (e.g., Aron et al., 2000), more recent work suggests that arousal (positive affect) is really what counts (Strong & Aron, 2006). The findings presented here support this idea.

The reasons for partner effects coming from the other couple members to the men (for disclosure, responsiveness, and positive affect) are unclear. It was speculated that men perhaps may have been feeling closer to the other couple as a function of the other couple's disclosure and responsiveness, in turn making the men feel closer to their own partners. Analyses showed that, for both men and women, feelings of closeness toward the other couple mediated the effects of the manipulation on feelings of closeness toward one's own partner. Although, at face value, this suggests a logical explanation for the findings above, the fact that self-disclosure, partner responsiveness and positive affect had very different effects on closeness toward the other couple than they did for closeness towards one's partner make this explanation less plausible.

While the findings from this study point to several possible mechanisms underlying the effects of the closeness induction method, they admittedly are very preliminary and have at least two significant limitations. First, because of the large number of paths in each APIM model, there was not enough power to test whether certain mediators accounted for most or all of the effects of the manipulation. Was it positive affect, self-disclosure or both that were responsible for variations in levels of closeness

between couples? We cannot tell from these findings whether one mediator is more important than another. Future studies using larger samples and studies in which mediators are manipulated (e.g., manipulating how disclosing the closeness-inducting questions are) are needed.

Second, a very reasonable argument could be made that the direction of the effects between each mediator and outcome variable could be reversed—in particular because the proposed mediators and outcome variables (with the exception of contact with the other couple) were measured at the same point in time. For example, it could be that feeling close toward the other couple lead to increases in positive affect, not the other way around. However, subsequent analyses (not detailed in the results section for economy of space) showed that—in every case—switching the outcome and the mediator yielded a poorer fit for the data. Future studies examining these questions with larger samples followed over time are necessary to effectively rule out issues of directionality.

IMPLICATIONS

Social and clinical psychologists, sociologists and anyone interested in the study of relationships would benefit from understanding how and why couples are impacted by people outside of their relationships. As demonstrated with the findings reported here, studying how friendships between couples form can lead to a better understanding not only of how outsiders impact the quality of couples' relationships but also a better understanding of basic questions about how friendships develop in the first place.

These same issues arise in our own relationships. Are my partner and I at our best when we are alone on an island or at a crowded party? If my romantic partner and I want

to get to know another couple, what sorts of questions should we ask them? And how should we respond when they tell us personal things about themselves? Despite how often we come into contact with other people in the context of our relationships, little is known about how these people affect our relationships and how our relationships affect them.

From a clinical standpoint, the findings from this dissertation offer preliminary evidence that having close, intimate and shared interactions with others outside of ones relationship offer relationship-enhancing benefits. Interventions developed for distressed couples potentially could integrate aspects of social networks into their approaches, either through structured interactions such as the one used here or by providing couples with strategies to strengthen current friendships or even form new ones.

The method used in this dissertation provides a framework for examining how friendships develop in a controlled laboratory setting. The results show that closeness between couples can be generated relatively quickly and with lasting effects. Recent advances in statistical modeling allow researchers to now estimate and clarify—with relative ease—a multitude of paths to friendship. Hopefully, relationship researchers will take advantage of these methodological and statistical advances and incorporate aspects of social networks into their studies. As described, the potential benefits of such studies are wide-ranging.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

In some ways, this dissertation prompts more questions than it answers. Perhaps most obvious is when and under what conditions do couples feel closer to other couples

after going through this type of closeness-inducing procedure? Self-disclosure is undoubtedly part of it. But the couples in the closeness condition were given questions relating to a broad array of topics, some disclosing, some not. Certain types of questions likely are better at eliciting closeness than others. Future studies could easily manipulate the questions to isolate different effects. For example, is it better to disclose information about negative experiences, positive experiences, or both? Although much of the research examining disclosure in close relationships has focused on negative disclosures and the support from partners that they elicit (Pasch & Bradbury, 1998), recent findings suggest that how people respond to positive event disclosures is important as well (Gable, Reis, Impett, & Asher, 2004). A number of questions in the procedure are geared toward getting couples to feel similar to one another, either implicitly or explicitly (e.g., "Make 3 true "we" statements each. For instance 'All four of us in this room are feeling'."). Thus, the extent to which people are made to feel similar to each other could be manipulated. There are many ways in which the questions in this procedure could be altered to better understand how friendships develop.

The same is true for the effects of the closeness-induction method for within-relationship closeness. Some of the questions used in this procedure—albeit a small percentage—asked questions directly about a person's romantic relationship (e.g., "Describe what a perfect date would be for you and your romantic partner."). To what extent were these relationship-oriented questions responsible for the greater feelings of closeness toward romantic partners in the closeness condition? This should be addressed in future studies using this paradigm.

Finally, this paradigm could be used to examine the effects of individual difference variables on the development of closeness between couples. For instance, do certain types of people (e.g., securely attached individuals) feel closer to those they interact with and do their interaction partners feel closer to them? The effects of individual difference variables on within-couple closeness also could be examined. Of the potential moderators examined in this study—Big 5 personality variables, gender, and length of time dating—only length of time dating moderated the effects of the manipulation. However, many other types of questions regarding individual differences could be addressed using this paradigm in the future.

CONCLUSION

Are we producing "real" closeness with this method? As Aron and colleagues (1997) concluded in their validation of this procedure for use with individuals—yes and no. The closeness produced in this study is probably most akin to the closeness produced between two couples after a really good first "date." In some ways, perhaps closer, because people disclosed much more in these lab conversations than many would be comfortable doing during a first meeting. That many of these couples progressed toward true friendships—contacting each other, and, in some cases, meeting up for a second date—is further indication that the closeness produced here is real.

Based on a growing number of studies, there now is compelling evidence that couples' shared friendships with others outside of their relationship can yield benefits not only for the individual but for the couple itself. Although how and why friendships may

be beneficial for couples still is unclear, investigating these social ties likely will bring greater understanding of the paths to relationship quality and the paths to friendship.

Appendix A

Measure of Enjoyment of Interaction with Female in Other Couple

Below are a number of questions that apply to how you view the female in the couple you just met. Please answer these questions as accurately and honestly as possible. Your answers will be completely confidential.

1. How much did you like the female in this couple?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Not at all								A lot

2. How much did you enjoy interacting with her?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Not at all								A lot

3. How close did you feel to her?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Not at all								Extremely

4. How fun was she?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Not at all								Extremely

5. How much did you "click" with her?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Not at all								A lot

6. How much would you like to hang out with her again in the future?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Not at all								A lot

Appendix B

Measure of Enjoyment of Interaction with Male in Other Couple

Below are a number of questions that apply to how you view the male in the couple you just met. Please answer these questions as accurately and honestly as possible. Your answers will be completely confidential.

1. How much did you like the male in this couple?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Not at all								A lot

2. How much did you enjoy interacting with him?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Not at all								A lot

3. How close did you feel to him?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Not at all								Extremely

4. How fun was he?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Not at all								Extremely

5. How much did you "click" with him?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Not at all								A lot

6. How much would you like to hang out with him again in the future?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Not at all								A lot

Appendix C

Measure of Novelty of Interaction

Below are a number of questions that apply to what you thought about the interaction you just had with the other couple. Please answer these questions as accurately and honestly as possible. Your answers will be completely confidential.

1. This interaction was a very novel experience for my romantic partner and me.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Not true								Definitely true

2. This interaction was quite different than anything I've done with my romantic partner before.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Not true								Definitely true

3. This interaction was quite similar to other times that my partner and I have met other couples for the first time. (reverse-scored)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Not true								Definitely true

4. This interaction was quite different from how my partner and I usually spend time together.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Not true								Definitely true

5. My romantic partner do this kind of thing all the time. (reverse-scored)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Not true								Definitely true

6. Having this type of interaction with other people outside our relationship was a very new experience for my romantic partner and me.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Not true								Definitely true

7. I've never done anything like this with my partner before.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Not true								Definitely true

Appendix D

Time II (Next Day) Follow-Up Measure

1. To what extent did you and your romantic partner talk about the other couple after the study was finished? (e.g., shared your thoughts about the couple, said how much you liked or disliked them, etc.)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Not at all								A great deal

2. Would you be interested in hanging out with this couple again in the future?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Not at all								Very much

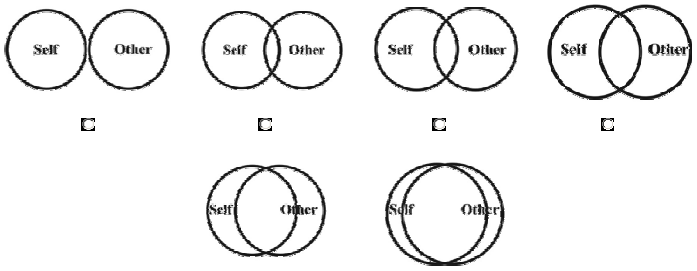
3. How much do you hope that this couple stays together in the future?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Not at all								Very much

4. To what extent do you think this couple hopes that you and your partner to stay together?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Not at all								Very much

5. Please select the picture below that best describes your relationship with your romantic partner over the past 24 hours:



Appendix E

Time III (Month Later) Follow-Up Measure

1. To what extent have you and your romantic partner talked about the other couple during the past month (e.g., shared your thoughts about the couple, said how much you liked or disliked them, etc.)?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Not at all								A great deal

2. Would you be interested in hanging out with this couple again in the future?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Not at all								Very much

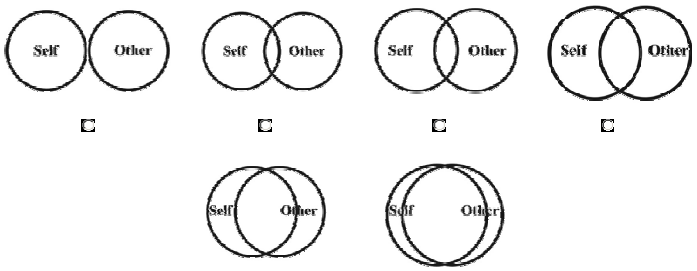
3. How much do you hope that this couple stays together in the future?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Not at all								Very much

4. To what extent do you think this couple hopes that you and your partner to stay together?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Not at all								Very much

5. Please select the picture below that best describes your relationship with your romantic partner over the past 24 hours:



7. Have you or your partner been in contact with the other couple since you met them in this study? _____yes _____no

8. If so, approximately how many times have you hung out with them since participating in this study? ____ times

Appendix F

Instructions to Couples Included With Task Slips Packet

For the next 45 minutes, the four of you are going to alternate asking and answering questions from the set of sheets in this envelope here. *Name of Participant A*, you will begin by drawing a sheet and reading that question aloud. After *Name of Participant B* finishes answering, *Name of Participant C* should then also answer the question, then *Participant D* and *Participant A*. When all four of you have answered the question, *Name of Participant B* will ask the next question in the stack and *Name of Participant C* will answer, followed by *Name of Participant D*, and so on. Don't overly think your responses; just say the first thing that comes to mind. Your answers should take about 1 minute; try not to use one word answers. If any of you feel uncomfortable answering a question or do not have an answer you can move on to the next question in the stack. If you run out of questions before I return, please go back to any of the questions that you feel needed a more detailed response. Do you have any questions?

The forty-five minutes is broken down into three segments, I will come in every 15 minutes to give you a new set of cards.

You may begin.

Appendix G

Questions for Closeness Condition

Set I

1. Given the choice of anyone in the world, who would you want as a dinner guest and why?

2. Would you like to be famous? In what way?

3. Before making a telephone call, do you ever rehearse what you are going to say? Why?

4. What would constitute a "perfect" day for you?

5. Describe what a perfect date would be for you and your romantic partner.

6. If you were able to live to the age of 90 and retain either the mind or body of a 30-year-old for the last 60 years of your life, which would you want?

7. Name three things you and your romantic partner appear to have in common with the other couple.

8. For what in your life do you feel most grateful?

9. If you could change anything about the way you were raised, what would it be?

10. Take 3 minutes and tell the others your life story in as much detail as possible.

11. If you could wake up tomorrow having gained any one quality or ability, what would it be?

Appendix G (Continued)

Set II

12. What were your first thoughts and feelings about your romantic partner when you first met him or her?

13. If a crystal ball could tell you the truth about yourself, your life, the future, or anything else, what would you want to know?

14. Is there something that you've dreamed of doing for a long time? Why haven't you done it?

15. What is the greatest accomplishment of your life?

16. What do you value most in a friendship?

17. What is your favorite memory?

18. What is your most terrible memory?

19. If you knew that in one year you would die suddenly, would you change anything about the way you are now living? Why?

20. What does friendship mean to you?

21. What roles do love and affection play in your life?

22. How close and warm is your family? Do you feel your childhood was happier than most other people's?

23. How do you feel about your relationship with your mother?

Appendix G (Continued)

Set III

24. Make 3 true "we" statements each. For instance "All four of us in this room are feeling. . ."

25. What are the three things that you like the most about your romantic partner?

26. If you were going to become close friends with the other couple you've met here, please share what would be important for them to know.

27. Tell the other couple what you like about them; be very honest with them, saying things that you might not say to someone you've just met.

28. Share with the other couple an embarrassing moment in your life.

29. When did you last cry in front of another person? By yourself?

30. What, if anything, is too serious to be joked about?

31. Your house, containing everything you own, catches fire. After saving your loved ones and pets, you have time to safely make a final dash to save any one item. What would it be? Why?

32. Of all the people in your family, whose death would you find most disturbing? Why?

33. Share a personal problem and ask everyone's advice on how they might handle it. Also, ask them to reflect back to you how you seem to be feeling about the problem you have chosen.

Appendix H

Questions for Small Talk Condition

Set I

1. When was the last time you walked for more than 15 minutes by yourself? Describe where you went and what you saw.

2. Describe in detail how you make your typical breakfast (e.g., an omelet, pancakes, cereal, etc.).

3. Do you read a newspaper often and which do you prefer? If you don't read the paper, how do you get your news?

4. What is a good number of people to live in one household and why?

5. Describe in detail how you managed your time for the last 24 hours. Try to be objective and accurate, and feel free to go into as much detail as possible. For example, you might start when your alarm went off and you got out of bed. You could include the things you ate, where you went, which buildings or objects you passed by as you walked from place to place.

6. What are the advantages and disadvantages of reading something online on the web vs. reading a hard paper copy. Each person please give one advantage and one disadvantage for each.

Appendix H (Continued)

Set II

7. Where are you from? Name all of the places you've lived.

8. In this exercise, each of you will read a passage to the rest of the group from a famous book.

Person 1, please read the following:

"Whether I shall turn out to be the hero of my own life, or whether that station will be held by anybody else, these pages must show. To begin my life with the beginning of my life, I record that I was born (as I have been informed and believe) on a Friday, at twelve o'clock at night. It was remarked that the clock began to strike, and I began to cry, simultaneously.

In consideration of the day and hour of my birth, it was declared by the nurse, and by some sage women in the neighborhood who had taken a lively interest in me several months before there was any possibility of our becoming personally acquainted, first, that I was destined to be unlucky in life; and secondly, that I was privileged to see ghosts and spirits; both these gifts inevitably attaching, as they believed, to all unlucky infants of either gender, born towards the small hours on a Friday night.

I need say nothing here, on the first head, because nothing can show better than my history whether that prediction was verified or falsified by the result. On the second branch of the question, I will only remark, that unless I ran through that part of my inheritance while I was still a baby, I have not come into it yet. But I do not at all complain of having been kept out of this property; and if anybody else should be in the present enjoyment of it, he is heartily welcome to keep it."

Appendix H (continued)

Person 2, please read the following:

“The first objects that assume a distinct presence before me, as I look far back, into the blank of my infancy, are my mother with her pretty hair and youthful shape, and Peggotty with no shape at all, and eyes so dark that they seemed to darken their whole neighborhood in her face, and cheeks and arms so hard and red that I wondered the birds didn't peck her in preference to apples.

I believe I can remember these two at a little distance apart, dwarfed to my sight by stooping down or kneeling on the floor, and I going unsteadily from the one to the other. I have an impression on my mind which I cannot distinguish from actual remembrance, of the touch of Peggotty's forefinger as she used to hold it out to me, and of its being roughened by needlework, like a pocket nutmeg-grater.

This may be fancy, though I think the memory of most of us can go farther back into such times than many of us suppose; just as I believe the power of observation in numbers of very young children to be quite wonderful for its closeness and accuracy. Indeed, I think that most grown men who are remarkable in this respect, may with greater propriety be said not to have lost the faculty, than to have acquired it; the rather, as I generally observe such men to retain a certain freshness, and gentleness, and capacity of being pleased, which are also an inheritance they have preserved from their childhood.

I might have a misgiving that I am 'meandering' in stopping to say this, but that it brings me to remark that I build these conclusions, in part upon my own experience of myself; and if it should appear from anything I may set down in this narrative that I was a child of close observation, or that as a man I have a strong memory of my childhood, I undoubtedly lay claim to both of these characteristics.”

Appendix H (continued)

Person 3, please read the following:

“The carrier's horse was the laziest horse in the world, I should hope, and shuffled along, with his head down, as if he liked to keep people waiting to whom the packages were directed. I fancied, indeed, that he sometimes chuckled audibly over this reflection, but the carrier said he was only troubled with a cough. The carrier had a way of keeping his head down, like his horse, and of drooping sleepily forward as he drove, with one of his arms on each of his knees. I say 'drove', but it struck me that the cart would have gone to Yarmouth quite as well without him, for the horse did all that; and as to conversation, he had no idea of it but whistling.

Peggotty had a basket of refreshments on her knee, which would have lasted us out handsomely, if we had been going to London by the same conveyance. We ate a good deal, and slept a good deal. Peggotty always went to sleep with her chin upon the handle of the basket, her hold of which never relaxed; and I could not have believed unless I had heard her do it, that one defenseless woman could have snored so much.

We made so many deviations up and down lanes, and were such a long time delivering a bedstead at a public-house, and calling at other places, that I was quite tired, and very glad, when we saw Yarmouth. It looked rather spongy and soppy, I thought, as I carried my eye over the great dull waste that lay across the river; and I could not help wondering, if the world were really as round as my geography book said, how any part of it came to be so flat. But I reflected that Yarmouth might be situated at one of the poles; which would account for it.”

Appendix H (continued)

Person 4, please read the following:

“If the room to which my bed was removed were a sentient thing that could give evidence, I might appeal to it at this day - who sleeps there now, I wonder - to bear witness for me what a heavy heart I carried to it. I went up there, hearing the dog in the yard bark after me all the way while I climbed the stairs; and, looking as blank and strange upon the room as the room looked upon me, sat down with my small hands crossed, and thought.

I thought of the oddest things. Of the shape of the room, of the cracks in the ceiling, of the paper on the walls, of the flaws in the window-glass making ripples and dimples on the prospect, of the washing-stand being rickety on its three legs, and having a discontented something about it, which reminded me of Mrs. Gummidge under the influence of the old one. I was crying all the time, but, except that I was conscious of being cold and dejected, I am sure I never thought why I cried. At last in my desolation I began to consider that I was dreadfully in love with little Emily, and had been torn away from her to come here where no one seemed to want me, or to care about me, half as much as she did. This made such a very miserable piece of business of it, that I rolled myself up in a corner of the counterpane, and cried myself to sleep.

I was awakened by somebody saying 'Here he is' and uncovering my hot head. My mother and Peggotty had come to look for me, and it was one of them who had done it.

'Davy,' said my mother. 'What's the matter?'

I thought it was very strange that she should ask me, and answered, 'Nothing.' I turned over on my face, I recollect, to hide my trembling lip, which answered her with greater truth. 'Davy,' said my mother. 'Davy, my child.' ”

9. Provide the names and ages of your family members, include grandparents, aunts and uncles, and where they were born (to the extent you know this information).

10. What gifts did you receive from family members last Christmas?

11. Describe in detail what you will do as soon as the experiment is over until you go to bed tonight. For example, you might start by noting that you will walk out of the door, go down the steps, walk across the campus, and so forth. The most important thing, however, is for you to describe your days as accurately and objectively as possible.

Appendix H (continued)

Set III

12. Describe in detail the route that you took from your home to the high school you attended your senior year as though you were giving the rest of the group directions to get there.

13. Do you subscribe to any magazines? Which ones? What have you subscribed to in the past?

14. In this exercise each of you will read a passage to the rest of the group from a famous book.

Person 1, please read aloud the following:

"The three last numbers of this paper have been dedicated to an enumeration of the dangers to which we should be exposed, in a state of disunion, from the arms and arts of foreign nations. I shall now proceed to delineate dangers of a different and, perhaps, still more alarming kind -- those which will in all probability flow from dissensions between the States themselves, and from domestic factions and convulsions. These have been already in some instances slightly anticipated; but they deserve a more particular and more full investigation.

A man must be far gone in Utopian speculations who can seriously doubt that, if these States should either be wholly disunited, or only united in partial confederacies, the subdivisions into which they might be thrown would have frequent and violent contests with each other. To presume a want of motives for such contests as an argument against their existence, would be to forget that men are ambitious, vindictive, and rapacious. To look for a continuation of harmony between a number of independent, unconnected sovereignties in the same neighborhood, would be to disregard the uniform course of human events, and to set at defiance the accumulated experience of ages.

The causes of hostility among nations are innumerable. There are some which have a general and almost constant operation upon the collective bodies of society. Of this description are the love of power or the desire of pre-eminence and dominion -- the jealousy of power, or the desire of equality and safety. There are others which have a more circumscribed though an equally operative influence within their spheres. Such are the rivalships and competitions of commerce between commercial nations. And there are others, not less numerous than either of the former, which take their origin entirely in private passions; in the attachments, enmities, interests, hopes, and fears of leading individuals in the communities of which they are members."

Appendix H (continued)

Person 2, Please read aloud the following passage:

"The ambitious cardinal, who was prime minister to Henry VIII., permitting his vanity to aspire to the triple crown, entertained hopes of succeeding in the acquisition of that splendid prize by the influence of the Emperor Charles V. To secure the favor and interest of this enterprising and powerful monarch, he precipitated England into a war with France, contrary to the plainest dictates of policy, and at the hazard of the safety and independence, as well of the kingdom over which he presided by his counsels, as of Europe in general. For if there ever was a sovereign who bid fair to realize the project of universal monarchy, it was the Emperor Charles V., of whose intrigues Wolsey was at once the instrument and the dupe.

The influence which the bigotry of one person, the petulance of another, and the cabals of a third, had in the contemporary policy, ferments, and pacifications, of a considerable part of Europe, are topics that have been too often descanted upon not to be generally known.

To multiply examples of the agency of personal considerations in the production of great national events, either foreign or domestic, according to their direction, would be an unnecessary waste of time. Those who have but a superficial acquaintance with the sources from which they are to be drawn, will themselves recollect a variety of instances; and those who have a tolerable knowledge of human nature will not stand in need of such lights to form their opinion either of the reality or extent of that agency. Perhaps, however, a reference, tending to illustrate the general principle, may with propriety be made to a case which has lately happened among ourselves. If Shays had not been a desperate debtor, it is much to be doubted whether Massachusetts would have been plunged into a civil war."

Appendix H (continued)

Person 3, Please read aloud the following passage:

"Sparta, Athens, Rome, and Carthage were all republics; two of them, Athens and Carthage, of the commercial kind. Yet were they as often engaged in wars, offensive and defensive, as the neighboring monarchies of the same times. Sparta was little better than a well-regulated camp; and Rome was never sated of carnage and conquest.

Carthage, though a commercial republic, was the aggressor in the very war that ended in her destruction. Hannibal had carried her arms into the heart of Italy and to the gates of Rome, before Scipio, in turn, gave him an overthrow in the territories of Carthage, and made a conquest of the commonwealth.

Venice, in later times, figured more than once in wars of ambition, till, becoming an object to the other Italian states, Pope Julius II found means to accomplish that formidable league, which gave a deadly blow to the power and pride of this haughty republic.

The provinces of Holland, till they were overwhelmed in debts and taxes, took a leading and conspicuous part in the wars of Europe. They had furious contests with England for the dominion of the sea, and were among the most persevering and most implacable of the opponents of Louis XIV.

In the government of Britain the representatives of the people compose one branch of the national legislature. Commerce has been for ages the predominant pursuit of that country. Few nations, nevertheless, have been more frequently engaged in war; and the wars in which that kingdom has been engaged have, in numerous instances, proceeded from the people."

Appendix H (continued)

Person 4, Please read aloud the following passage:

"The last war but between Britain and Spain sprang from the attempts of the British merchants to prosecute an illicit trade with the Spanish main. These unjustifiable practices on their part produced severity on the part of the Spaniards toward the subjects of Great Britain which were not more justifiable, because they exceeded the bounds of a just retaliation and were chargeable with inhumanity and cruelty. Many of the English who were taken on the Spanish coast were sent to dig in the mines of Potosi; and by the usual progress of a spirit of resentment, the innocent were, after a while, confounded with the guilty in indiscriminate punishment. The complaints of the merchants kindled a violent flame throughout the nation, which soon after broke out in the House of Commons, and was communicated from that body to the ministry. Letters of reprisal were granted, and a war ensued, which in its consequences overthrew all the alliances that but twenty years before had been formed with sanguine expectations of the most beneficial fruits.

From this summary of what has taken place in other countries, whose situations have borne the nearest resemblance to our own, what reason can we have to confide in those reveries which would seduce us into an expectation of peace and cordiality between the members of the present confederacy, in a state of separation? Have we not already seen enough of the fallacy and extravagance of those idle theories which have amused us with promises of an exemption from the imperfections, weaknesses and evils incident to society in every shape? Is it not time to awake from the deceitful dream of a golden age, and to adopt as a practical maxim for the direction of our political conduct that we, as well as the other inhabitants of the globe, are yet remote from the happy empire of perfect wisdom and perfect virtue?

It is sometimes asked, with an air of seeming triumph, what inducements could the States have, if disunited, to make war upon each other? It would be a full answer to this question to say -- precisely the same inducements which have, at different times, deluged in blood all the nations in the world. But, unfortunately for us, the question admits of a more particular answer. There are causes of differences within our immediate contemplation, of the tendency of which, even under the restraints of a federal constitution, we have had sufficient experience to enable us to form a judgment of what might be expected if those restraints were removed.

Appendix H (continued)

15. Describe in detail what you will be doing over the next week in detail as accurately and objectively as possible.

16. One of you say a word, the next say a word that starts with the last letter of the word just said. Do this until you have said 50 words. Any words will do--you aren't making a sentence.

Appendix I

Intercorrelations Among Post-Interaction Measures - Time I

Measure	IOScp	Rubin	EnjF	EnjM	IOS	MOQ	PLS	Selfds	RespF	RespM	RespP	PosAff	Novel	Learn	Hang	YHope	THope
IOScp	-----	.38	.49	.59	.30	.18	.30	.29	.15	.37	-.05	.23	.00	.26	.63	.24	.38
Rubin	.68	-----	.58	.53	.04	.37	-.01	.17	.40	.48	.06	.42	.19	.29	.49	.49	.28
EnjF	.59	.63	-----	.59	.16	.20	.00	.25	.54	.51	-.01	.31	.15	.23	.59	.35	.29
EnjM	.49	.66	.60	-----	.19	.11	.09	.29	.33	.67	-.05	.29	.21	.25	.63	.22	.38
IOS	.36	.20	.23	.22	-----	.26	.36	.05	-.08	.00	.06	.33	-.10	.21	.33	.07	.14
MOQ	.07	.24	.08	.28	-.01	-----	.17	.17	.17	.11	.09	.43	.15	.25	.15	.32	.12
PLS	.08	-.02	.01	-.05	.14	.10	-----	.08	-.01	.08	.17	.24	-.04	-.04	.21	.10	.19
Selfds	.43	.38	.31	.42	.04	.27	-.13	-----	.36	.35	.20	.24	.07	.17	.15	.19	.21
RespF	.52	.45	.68	.49	.23	.26	.11	.46	-----	.73	.28	.33	.22	.12	.19	.24	.09
RespM	.48	.49	.48	.74	.26	.31	.12	.35	.67	-----	.18	.28	.21	.17	.36	.16	.20
RespP	.32	.17	.15	.14	.42	.07	-.06	.25	.37	.30	-----	.39	.11	.09	.01	.09	.02
PosAff	.46	.54	.43	.46	.23	.30	-.13	.43	.37	.30	.23	-----	.10	.10	.34	.36	.34
Novel	.34	.42	.43	.36	.24	.19	-.10	.38	.23	.12	.13	.35	-----	.38	.02	-.01	-.02
Learn	.25	.07	.03	.04	.06	-.02	-.01	.37	.06	-.03	.00	.21	.41	-----	.22	.17	.20
Hang	.52	.59	.62	.75	.21	.33	-.08	.38	.49	.60	.11	.46	.48	.11	-----	.31	.30
YHope	.42	.57	.53	.58	.24	.37	-.10	.35	.43	.39	.31	.56	.49	.16	.52	-----	.70
THope	.42	.67	.47	.63	.15	.34	-.12	.43	.50	.43	.23	.48	.38	-.02	.57	.75	-----

Note. Correlations above the diagonal are for those in the closeness condition; correlations below the diagonal are for those in the small talk condition. IOScp = IOS closeness with other couple; Rubin = Rubin Scale liking of other couple; EnjF = Enjoyed interacting with female in other couple; EnjM = Enjoyed interacting with male in other couple; IOS = IOS closeness with romantic partner; MOQ = Marital Opinion Questionnaire; PLS = Passionate Love Scale; Selfds = Self-disclosure; RespF = Other female's responsiveness to your disclosure; RespM = Other male's responsiveness to your disclosure; RespP = Romantic partner's responsiveness to your disclosure; PosAff = PANAS positive affect; Novel = Novelty of interaction; Learn = Learned new things about romantic partner; Hang = Interest in hanging out with this couple again in the future; YHope = Your hope that the other couple stays together in the future; THope = How much you think the other couple hopes you and your partner stay together. All $|r|$s > .24 are significant at $p < .05$.

Appendix J

Intercorrelations Among Items – Time II (Next Day)

Item	Amount talk	Want to hang	Hope they stay	They hope you stay	IOS
Amount talk	-----	.60	.42	.33	.07
Want to hang	.41	-----	.55	.52	.15
Hope they stay	.39	.39	-----	.87	-.02
They hope you stay	.47	.48	.70	-----	-.11
IOS	.05	.41	.13	.09	-----

Note. Correlations above the diagonal are for those in the closeness condition; correlations below the diagonal are for those in the small talk condition. Amount talk = Amount of talk about the other couple after the study was finished; Want to hang = Interest in hanging out with this couple again in the future; Hope they stay = Hope that the other couple stays together in the future; They hope you stay = How much you think other couple hopes you and your partner stay together. All $|r|$s > .25 are significant at $p < .05$.

Appendix K

Intercorrelations Among Items – Time III (Month Later)

Item	Amount talk	Want to hang	Hope they stay	They hope you stay	IOS
Amount talk	-----	.60	.29	.30	.02
Want to hang	.22	-----	.49	.45	.10
Hope they stay	.26	.44	-----	.78	.25
They hope you stay	.31	.45	.86	-----	.11
IOS	.13	.36	.27	.22	-----

Note. Correlations above the diagonal are for those in the closeness condition; correlations below the diagonal are for those in the small talk condition. Amount talk = Amount of talk about the other couple after the study was finished ; Want to hang = Interest in hanging out with this couple again in the future; Hope they stay = Hope that the other couple stays together in the future; They hope you stay = How much you think other couple hopes you and your partner stay together; IOS = IOS closeness with romantic partner. All $|r|$s > .26 are significant at $p < .05$.

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Vita

Richard Bennett Slatcher was born in Wilmington, Delaware on August 21, 1972, the son of Edward and Elaine Slatcher. After attending Archmere Academy, he went on to the University of Richmond, where he majored in Business Administration and minored in Art History. After graduating from the University of Richmond in 1995, he was membership coordinator for the Virginia Association of Museums until 1997, when he moved to Washington, D.C. to become a development associate at the National Gallery of Art. In 1999, he was hired as the Associate Director of Development for the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences at George Washington University. There, he began studying psychology and conducted research with Professor Maria Cecilia Zea. While living in Washington, he met Julia Altrocchi, whom he married in April 2002. In the fall of 2002, he and his wife moved to Austin to pursue his doctoral degree in social and personality psychology at the University of Texas under the supervision of Professor James Pennebaker. While at the University of Texas, he was awarded a Pre-Emptive Fellowship in 2002 and a University Continuing Fellowship in 2007. He is author or co-author of articles that have appeared in *Psychological Science*, *Journal of Research in Personality*, and *Science*. Upon graduation, Richard will begin an NIMH post-doctoral fellowship in health psychology at the University of California, Los Angeles. He and his wife have 2 children—Bennett, 3 and Wade, 1.

Permanent address: 4249 East Boulevard #1, Los Angeles, CA 90066

This dissertation was typed by the author.